

RAZORCAKE

#45



Leatherface

RKL (a memorial) Political Commentary!
Infoshop? Infoshop! Bad Reaction

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Razorcake is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly from us—regardless of amount—have been large components to our continued survival.

We've been busy beavers. Last year, *Razorcake* launched the non-profit *Razorcake Records*. The idea that drives it runs parallel to the zine: celebrate our culture in a form you can hear, all at reasonable prices. We're being conscientious to release great music from our area, Los Angeles, while not ignoring great music that comes our way from around the world. In the span of a month, we will release three very different records by Tiltwheel (San Diego), God Equals Genocide (Santa Clarita), and Killer Dreamer (San Pedro). We're using local resources—from the recording to the mastering to silk-screening—whenever we can. Basically, we're shuttin' up, getting stuff done, and treating everyone how we'd like to be treated, instead of just theorizing about it.

Even though it doesn't look like a traditional ad on the opposite side of this page—blowhards we are not—it is the gateway to our website, which is updated every other day. Not only does it feature exclusive podcasts (a new one every Friday), live reviews, columns, and photo features that aren't in the zine, it also hosts our ever-expanding hand-picked distribution of other fellow DIY-ers'. If you're looking for great, new music, we think it's a great place to browse for records, zines, and books.

If you would like to give *Razorcake* some assistance, we're looking for help in the following areas: non-profit grant writer, FileMaker Pro wizard, PHP-nuke website coders, website record review posters, and anyone who has experience with setting up a 501(c)6. If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand.

Contact us via www.razorcake.org if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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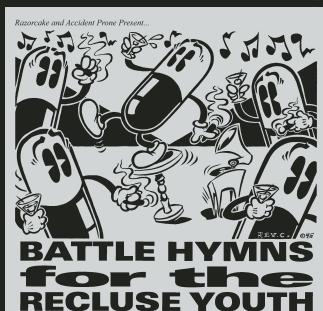
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Bring Ear Plugs

My Dad looks like Colonel Potter from *M*A*S*H*. Once, a lady in a grocery store was so convinced of it that she asked him to autograph a carton of milk, which he did. Another time, he was at a NOFX show, Razorcake shirt tucked in, chatting up some punks amongst the throngs, comfortable as could be, giving me the thumbs up on the suggestion that he bring ear plugs to the show. "That was loud," he said. "I liked the horns." My father reads every issue of *Razorcake*. Every six months or so, he pulls out an issue he's been reading during toilet time, flips to a section marked off with a post-it note, and starts asking questions. "Did that really happen to Sean Carswell or did he just make that up?" Or "What is Nardcore?" Stuff that may trip up other parents, like Nardwuar's interview with Tommy Lee of Mötley Crüe using his wang to honk a boat's horn, slides right off of him. My Dad's a retired social worker who now devotes a lot of his free time refurbishing nature trails and volunteering for triathlons. He's a force of nature. Even though he doesn't know too much about punk rock outside of this zine, the long time contributors who've hung out with both of my parents, and that NOFX concert several years ago, he's one of Razorcake's biggest fans and supporters.

It may seem a little strange, having a long term conversation about punk rock with my Dad. He's just supportive and helps me maintain a sense of perspective. "It doesn't feel like you're trying to pull anything over in *Razorcake*," he said once. "And don't take this badly; people can take it or leave it. It's honest."

My Dad had put his finger on what many others had failed to grasp. There are two tiers to Razorcake. The first tier is my fandom. It would be ridiculous for me to spend seven and a half years of my life on a zine and not be a huge fan of what we cover. I'm a so-so smart dude, and if my main concerns were being self-employed and making money, doing a zine on

DIY punk would be a stupid financial decision. But I love this culture; have interviewed hundreds of bands, reviewed thousands. My secret motivation is not to build a resume for a better job, it is not a ladder to some weird sort of quasi fame, but it's solely to remain a longtime fan, chronicler, contributor, and critic. I hope the tide slowly rises with Razorcake, that we can help shape and foster this culture. That's my ambition.

The second tier to Razorcake is trust and respect for our long-term contributors' opinions and views, even if I completely disagree with them. I don't want Razorcake to paint itself into a dogmatic corner or for it to reek of a cult. Instead of laying down ultra-explicit rules and guidelines about what we will and won't cover, I leave it up to my long-time contributors to bring to the table whatever they're amped up about and let them run with it. That way, although I'm the editor of the good ship *Razorcake*, I'm discovering new music and new ideas, right along with you. Occasionally, I'm not as excited about the bands as the contributors are, but that's okay because I can't deny that the contributor's enthusiasm radiates through their writing. That's important. We're dealing with this living, developing thing called music as honestly as we can. My allegiance is to those who are in the long haul with me. Why compromise that trust? For ad money? For ego? For the illusion of "scene points"? That's fuckin' dumb.

Razorcake's mission is to cover what we find meaningful in our evolving culture. I don't think we're delusional. I don't think we're lying to ourselves. In turn, I hope you realize that Razorcake doesn't exist solely in the hope that you'll buy something—philosophically or monetarily—from us.

We're just one group of folks blazing and maintaining our own trail.
Thanks, Dad.

—Todd Taylor

AD DEADLINES

ISSUE #46

August 1st, 2008

ISSUE #47

October 1st, 2008

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Cover painting by Laura Predny,
(laurapredny.com)
Cover lettering by Art Fuentes

This issue is dedicated to the birth of Sean Faloon, son of Mike and Allie.
Rest in peace: George Carlin, Utah Phillips, Tim Russert, and Speedo the dog.

Contact *Razorcake* via our regularly updated website, www.razorcake.org or PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042

"People make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."

—Karl Marx (Paraphrase. He used the word "men" instead of "people.")



"Are you kidding?"

was Lori's initial response to Brian's wedding proposal.

Apparently, he wasn't.

Warmest congratulations to Brian Archer and Lori Lavinthal.

THANK YOU: Frankie Stubbs's face is like a road map that dispenses with the pleasantries of "three warnings" thanks to Laura Predny for the cover painting and her illo. in the Leatherface layout; Bluto Blutariski with a steady hand thanks to Art Fuentes for the lettering on the cover; Skulls! Fuckin' love skulls, especially with octopus tentacles thanks to Kiyoshi Nakazawa for his illo. in Jim's column; The Ergs! took the KKK away from Nerb and the stick/rod flare-up continues thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo; Is it just me being not so impressed with how they gnaw bamboo, or does that panda just look like it's begging to be tackled? thanks to Michael Forrester for his photo in the Chicken's column; Is it a man sleeping on the job, or a man holding his sack in public? You decide thanks to Yvonne Gomez for her photo in Dale's column; Mr. Ed is totally pissed at those Frenchies thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; Good life lesson: "Make sure you're kissing the right person" thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo in Sean's column; Is it too late to be holding out for a Kucinich? Is the electoral college still around... that sonofajig is totally outdated... thanks to Chris Pepus and Jeff Fox for their political articles; Fuck the kids, celebrate devil music thanks to Joe Dana, Don Seki, Chad Sengstock, and Keith Rosson for all their help on the Bad Reaction interview; So, what you're saying is that it's totally like if a Barnes & Noble swallowed a Starbucks? Oh, the opposite of that? Got it. Thanks to Lauren Trout, Steve Larder, and Dave Disorder for their talents with the Infoshop? Infoshop! article; For years, people have asked, "What's one interview you've been wanting to do really badly?"... "Frankie Stubbs." And now it's done. What do I do now? Start interviewing corn dogs? thanks to Lauren Measure for laying out the Leatherface interview; Wait, rewind, they won the lottery and now three of them are dead? thanks to Jan Röhlik, Trust Magazine, Jens W., Helge S., and Albert Lam for their help on the RKL interview; These music, book, zine, and DVD reviewers would poop their pants if each item that they reviewed positively and/or insightfully, the people who were reviewed, wrote a nice letter saying "Keep up the good work, reviewer!" thanks to Ryan Leach, Mr. Z, Dave Williams, Adrian Salas, Matt Average, Joe Evans III, Josh Benke, Donutholesofthehead, Art Ettinger, Bryan Static, Mike Faloon, Kristen K, Jennifer Whiteford, Will Kwiatski, Dave Dillon, Vincent Battilana, Jimmy Alvarado, Reyan Ali, Marcus Solomon, Kurt Morris, Maddy Pantalones Apretados, MP Johnson, Ty Stranglehold, Sean Koepenick, Chris Pepus, Keith Rosson, and Lauren Trout; Thanks, Chris Baxter for making us look pretty with your Photoshop makeup kit; We still blush when folks trust us so much to throw a benefit in our name thanks to Shahab and Heela Geykido Comet; Adrian Salas, Vincent Battilana, Rene Navarro, Juan, and Matt Army all sat in the office and either stamped, cut, buttoned, photocopied, or otherwise made our days at HQ a bit less hectic, and we thank 'em for it; It's still a dark, scary digital whathaveyou thanks to Ian Silber and Ernst Schoen-rene for their help with the website; This issue's "Fuck You, Dale" is on Davey Tiltwheel's guitar strap.

EVERYBODY'S WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND



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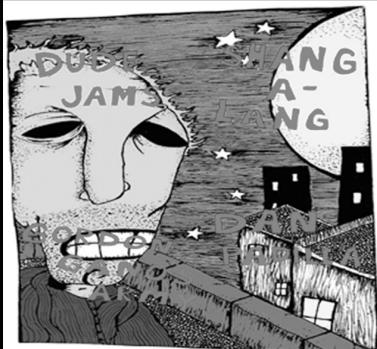
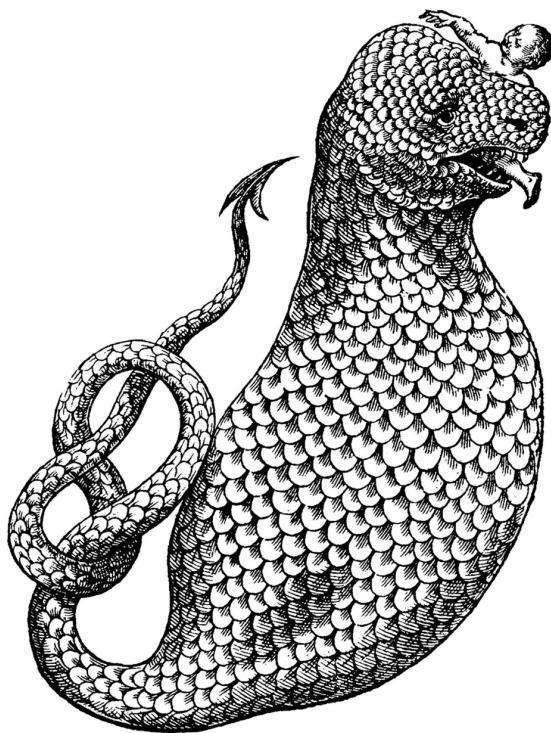
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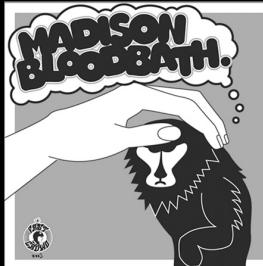


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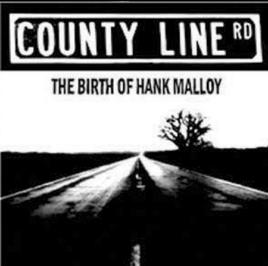
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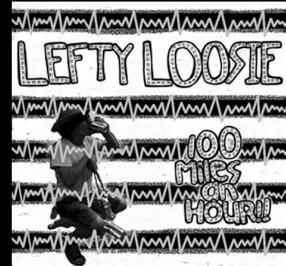


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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

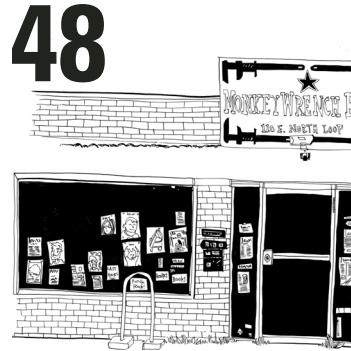
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"When you are a writer, you do, in a way become accustomed to lost stories."

The Lost Story

From 2006 through 2007, I was editor of *The Rockit*, a music newspaper that existed in Los Angeles. Throughout the paper's brief run, I managed to learn more than I had in years of freelancing. The first, and probably biggest, lesson learned on the job is that there is such a thing as too many CDs. There was never enough time to listen to everything we received at HQ, let alone enough page space to fit so much as a blurb on the albums in print. That *Hooked on You*, a full-length from British dance music outfit Secret Stealth made it into my car's CD player was just the luck of its position at the top of a heap of packages filling out a plastic U.S. mail bucket.

Secret Stealth is the project of Jim Baron and Bob Sadler, two guys from Nottingham with extensive backgrounds in house and disco and ridiculously awesome record collections. They turn vintage vinyl references into a sweeping night club score punctuated by vocalists Holly Backler, Tom Bailey, and Katty Heath to create an album called *Mince & Onions*, which was later revamped and released as *Hooked on You* in the States.

I didn't know any of this when I heard the album. When I let the CD play through my car speakers while gradually fiddling with the volume until I finally cranked it, what I noticed was how foreign it sounded in comparison to the glut of dance releases that had made it into my sound system last summer. Where so many of the popular tracks from dance artists last summer sounded to be inspired by a shoddy recording of a Daft Punk show—all high-pitched keyboard squelches and little resembling a bassline—*Hooked on You* focused on the groove, letting the space age melodies gently guide listeners instead of crying for attention. It was clearly steeped in the four-four rhythmic tradition of house music, but lacked the obvious pandering to the indie rock minions that had marked the LCD Soundsystem album that was so hyped a few months earlier. Where other discs appeared to be simply cogs in a buzz factory, *Hooked on You* felt genuine. It's an album that wanted nothing more than to make people dance. I presumed, though, that it would be obscured by sounds that were less interesting and easier to market. It doesn't take a genius to understand the nature of the beast.

That I heard *Hooked on You* was just chance, but when I took the opportunity to interview the Bob and Holly from Secret Stealth while they were in Los Angeles (Jim was unable to make the trip), it was because what they did was that good.

But a good album doesn't necessarily make for a good article. Sometimes your research comes up thin, sometimes your interview questions suck and sometimes the band is just boring. And in music journalism, where virtually every story hangs on one brief Q and A session, those twenty minutes allotted by the group's handlers (generally situated between several other twenty-minute interviews conducted by other journalists who are probably going to ask the same questions that you intend to ask) mean everything.

Over a phone call that connected two separate sections of Los Angeles, I spoke primarily with Bob. It was small talk at first. They had played in the back room of Giant a few nights earlier. I happened to be there, but didn't know they were playing and, thanks to a massive crowd in attendance for Infected Mushroom and a few overzealous security guards, couldn't get into the back room. Coincidentally, I spent the car ride to the club playing *Hooked on You* while gushing over the band to my boyfriend.

Chit-chat, that part of the interview that I use as a gage for the rest of the conversation, led to a discussion on what seemed to be a favorite topic for both of us: record collecting.

"Oh, dear, I can't even think," Bob said when I asked him about his favorite 12-inch singles. Through the phone, I could hear him walk towards his DJ bag and flip through a stack of vinyl.

"I think Atmosfear 'Dancing in Outer Space' is up there," he answered.

I had to interrupt him and let him know that this was a favorite piece of my collection as well. Although it has been sampled numerous times, "Dancing in Outer Space" doesn't have much name recognition outside of DJ circles. It's a lengthy space-funk jam, far more subdued than a George Clinton piece, but still filled with a mix of horns, keyboards, and throbbing bass that screamed of the future back in 1979. I found my copy at the Goodwill for less than a dollar, and I told him that, thus prompting a lament on

collecting in the Internet age. You can find anything you want online, he said, but it just isn't the same as scouring a thrift store for nothing in particular and leaving with a random, beautiful find.

Bob kept flipping through his records as we spoke, interrupting himself to mention several other favorite records and offer related anecdotes.

"Of course, Chaka Khan," he mentioned. "The first time [Holly] came into the studio with us, to try and get her vibed up, I played this song 'Love' by Chaka Khan. It's now one of her favorite records and it's definitely one of mine."

The dance between interviewer and interviewee can easily become mechanical. You spit out a question and your subject replies with an answer that has clearly been rehearsed. But when you treat the meeting as if it was simply a conversation between two new acquaintances on the smoking patio of a night club, the awkwardness of the situation disappears, and a series of stories begin to unfold. On the phone, Bob told me about DJing in Norway, the influence of African-American music on British artists, and the small but prolific group of players creating tunes in Nottingham.

Over the following few days, I was able to catch two of Secret Stealth's weeklong string of L.A. shows. The first was at Temporary Spaces, which is one of those roaming events that operate under clandestine circumstances. While standing on the patio, I heard a familiar British voice, turned around, and asked the tall guy with the genial face, "Are you Bob?" We began to chat and he quickly introduced me to Holly, a young-looking Australian with wild blonde hair. We talked extensively, again about records, but also about Holly's transition from opera student to soul star and what we have done outside of music.

The second event was at The Rootdown, a soul/funk/house club in Silver Lake. I brought my boyfriend with me for a bit of perspective. Like me, he was floored by Holly's voice, not just her command of the notes, but the conviction with which she delivered the lyrics. It was like listening to "Tainted Love" or "Band of Gold" on 45 for the first time, falling awestruck over the raw emotion oozing from the recordings. And then there was Bob's DJ set, wherein he



TODD TAYLOR

You can find anything you want online, he said, but it just isn't the same as scouring a thrift store for nothing in particular and leaving with a random, beautiful find.

played "Dancing in Outer Space" alongside the Doobie Brothers, Steely Dan, and a host of disco cuts we didn't recognize.

By the time Bob and Holly returned to the U.K., I was convinced that I had a great story. I had spent a good deal of time with the band, more than what is usually necessary for a 600 word piece, and managed to acquire ample quotes on the record, all of which could be linked together through an angle: vinyl junkies existing in an MP3 age. And so I began transcribing interview tape and jotting down notes. The more I wrote and the more I listened to *Hooked on You*, the more I became convinced that people had to hear Secret Stealth. This wasn't just a story for me, it was becoming a mission.

But no matter how deeply you desire a story, sometimes the intended piece will never see print. Shortly after I began working on the article, I found out that *The Rockit* was closing. In addition, I learned that the page count for the last issue would essentially be cut in half, leaving no room for my story.

After *The Rockit* folded, I was left with a stack of half-stories and untranscribed interview footage. Over the next few months, I was able to revise two of the unpublished pieces for other magazines, but the sad truth was that most of the bands involved had finished their publicity runs and in the fast-paced world of music journalism, that rendered the bulk of this work irrelevant.

When you are a writer, you do, in a way become accustomed to lost stories. There

are the ones that are in your head but, for whatever reason, never make it on to paper in a completed form. There are the ones that are immediately rejected and the ones that are accepted and then killed. You know this will happen and you accept it only because that's the way of the life you chose. At times, you will try to detach yourself from your stories, and, on occasion, that will be possible. However, there will always be the work that you do not for money or a job obligation, but because you truly believe in the subject matter. Those are the stories that become a part of you and when those pieces slip away, it is like heartbreak.

—Liz Ohanesian



"I hooted and hollered with my fellow deck apes."

Over the Side

1.

The Butthole Surfers tell us it is better to regret something we have done than something we haven't done. This is good advice for the young, the shy, and the tentative, but now that I'm on the verge of crossing over from my thirties into my forties, into the other meridian of my life, I'm not so certain I agree.

The two years I spent in the Navy are strewn with regrets. I regret my decision to stay on the ship and save my money instead of exploring the city of Hiroshima, Japan, which our military famously destroyed during World War II. I regret the things I said to my Commanding Officer on the beach in Darwin, Australia, that resulted in a loss of liberty and nights with blonde-haired Dindy and dark-haired Rose. I regret getting so drunk in the Enlisted Men's Club in San Diego that I didn't realize that the base security officer I was in the process of assaulting was female until it was too late. (I swung and I missed; then the rest of the goons stepped on my neck, pinned my arms back, etc.) Some days I regret ever having joined the Navy at all.

Of course, without these incidents, I never would have become the person that I am today, a person who can be counted on not to repeat the mistakes of my youth. At least on most days.

But there is one thing that I did that I deeply regret. Something so stupid, so thoughtless, that I'm at a loss to account for my actions. Not once or twice but over and over and over again. Countless times.

I'm talking about trash and how I disposed of it. I'm talking, of course, about all the things I threw over the side and into the sea.

The habit started early. I was assigned to the paint locker and one of my first tasks was to clean it up, reorganize things. Many of the paints stored in the locker and down in lower flammable storage beneath the anchor windlass room had been re-classified as hazardous material. My job was to sort through the stuff, figure out what had to go, and get rid of it. The petty officer in charge made it clear that I had two choices: I could fill out the paper work on each item, carry it off the ship to the pier, put it on the truck, and drive it over the hazardous material storage area.

"What's my other choice?"

"Wait until we're out to sea and throw it over the side."

"Okay."

"Just make sure we're in international waters."

I took the easy way out. In fact, I made great sport of it. The next time we went underway, I fixed one end of a line to a stanchion, the other end to a can, and gave it the old heave ho. Sometimes our crude tow lines snapped and the cans sunk, sometimes they bobbed on the surface of our enormous wake like a water skier until the lids popped off and the toxic paint sprayed all over the foam. I hooted and hollered with my fellow deck apes.

I did worse things during my hundred days of galley duty. I was sent to work in the deep sink. Not only did I toss all of our trash and wet garbage (e.g., excess food) over the side, but whatever pots and pans I didn't feel like cleaning, including a massive twenty-gallon stainless steel kettle.

I think of what happened to all the things I threw into the Pacific during our six-month cruise, and I'm filled with shame.

2.

Fifteen years after I joined the Navy, I found myself once again living by the sea. Instead of the hard labor and harsher discipline involved in living onboard ships, I lived comfortably in Manhattan Beach and Playa del Rey, seaside communities that straddle the airport at the western extremity of Los Angeles.

Beach life suited me. I lived on streets named Crest and Shell. I made the rounds at various nautical bars with names like Poop Deck, Shellbacks, and the infamous Harbor Room. I took in a great deal of sunsets. I enjoyed living in places that poor slobs from the rest of the country visited while on vacation.

As corny as it sounds, what I enjoyed most were the long walks on the beach. I walked in the morning and I walked at night. I took memorable walks with friends and loved ones that lasted for miles and miles. The roaring surf was also a great place to work out one's troubles. I was born on the East Coast and think of the Pacific as the end of America. So every time I turned around and went home, it was a new beginning.

During my walks, I always made it point to pick up trash. There were plenty of trash cans scattered about and they were

seldom full, so I arranged my walks so that I could drop off trash in them. I didn't have to go looking for it. There was trash all over the place. Some of it was left behind by people who visited the beach, but much of the debris washed in from the sea. The sight of sun-bleached refuse trapped in the sea wrack never failed to prick my conscience. I thought of the trash I threw over the side making its way to beaches all over the world and resolved to clean up as much of it as I could.

That's when I noticed the tennis balls.

Over the years, I found all kinds of things: beer cans, pieces of boats, dead sea life, a dime bag of bud. I learned to differentiate between trash left behind and trash that washed in, but, every time I went for a walk on the beach, I never failed to find at least one tennis ball. Some were almost new, fresh out of the can, while others were hard traveled, little more than rubber balls with patches of fuzz on them.

The balls perplexed me. Where did they come from? Dog-owners playing with their pets at the beach? Tennis courts from cruise ships? I almost convinced myself that the tennis balls were the result of a clandestine Navy bathysphere project.

I counted the balls and kicked them into the surf, but then I started to wonder if I was seeing the same balls over and over again, so I started bringing them home, writing the date on them, and dropping them in a bucket. When they filled up the bucket, I moved them to a box, then another, and another, until I had hundreds of tennis balls rescued from the briny deep in my apartment.

I didn't know why I did this or to what purpose, but I felt like it needed to be done.

Shortly before I left Los Angeles, a lifeguard told me the balls come from storm drains. Kids play with them in the street, they roll down the drain, and get flushed out to sea.

3.

I don't live at the beach anymore, but I still go on long walks. Now, instead of counting tennis balls, I count bunnies during nature walks in the Sweetwater Preserve.

Seriously.

It started with walks around the golf course, but this quickly got old. So instead of sharing the path with joggers and dog



NAKAZAWA 08

KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA

I think of what happened to all the things I threw into the Pacific during our six-month cruise, and I'm filled with shame.

walkers, I moved over to the much denser nature preserve where the bunnies run wild.

Fire season in San Diego is from June through October and last year was pretty devastating. So it was especially encouraging to see all the rain this spring and the new growth that comes with it. Rabbits, after all, are a symbol of fertility. When things are going well, the rabbits are plentiful. When they're not, you can figure out the rest. One Saturday morning walk I counted twenty-eight bunnies. I've come to think of them as my companions.

Recently, I went to the far edge of the nature preserve and kept walking. I went past the golf course, around the horse stables, and across a bridge that took me over the new freeway extension. This was where I usually stopped on my long walks, but on this particular occasion I kept going. I walked over the crest of the hill and the Sweetwater Reservoir and all of southern San Diego was revealed to me. The land is undeveloped and,

though the water wouldn't be here if not for the dam built in 1888, I was struck by its beauty. A feeling of tranquility came over me that I hadn't known since I went hiking in the Catalina conservancy, the one place you can go and see what Southern California would look like if there weren't any people.

I walked farther up the trail and found a plaque at Sweetwater Summit Park that told me the Sweetwater River system originates in the mountains sixty miles east of San Diego and empties—that's right, you guessed it—in the harbor south of the San Diego Naval Station where I'd spent my reckless youth. I'd caught glimpses of the reservoir from the freeway and tried to look for it in my truck, but never had any luck finding it. Instead, I'd stumbled upon it while walking on foot and was struck by the idea that something that seemed so far away was so much closer than I realized. Suddenly everything connected: mountains, rivers, oceans. Trash, bunnies, tennis balls. My personal past and the planet's geological future.

Now that it's fire season again, I'm starting to worry about the bunnies. When it doesn't rain, the creek in the Sweetwater Preserve dries up, the flowers die, and the undergrowth turns to kindling. When it does rain, the water flows again and the new growth sprouts, seemingly overnight. I'm astonished at how fragile this little corner of the world is, how completely at the mercy it is to environmental changes and how completely sucky it is when humans fuck it up. I want to do something about this, but what?

I'm not sure, but I know that counting bunnies and picking up trash isn't nearly enough.

Maybe the Butthole Surfers had it right after all: if we don't do something soon, we're all going to live to regret it.

—Jim Ruland



Five Cults, Each Ridiculous in Their Own Way

Greetings Razorakers big and small, clean and crusty, punk and punker! In my last two columns, I revealed to you the inner workings of Mormonism and the Jehovah's Witnesses. And yes, we safely concluded that these religions are both ridiculous and stupid, but perhaps better than Catholicism (to which Ben Weasel is, sadly, a recent convert!) or Protestantism because, I mean, if you're going to be religious, why not believe in the power of magic eyeglasses and divining rods or the evils of the Pledge of Allegiance and blood transfusions! I chose to write about those religions because, at least with Mormonism, they are considered marginally respectable, and yet both of their Complete and Total Silliness Quotients (CTSQ) are off the charts! And I deliberately avoided writing about cults because everyone already knows they're ridiculous, and I sometimes get annoyed that cults are singled out for being bizarre while mainstream religion is not, and yet... when my sister introduced me to the cult of Osho, well, I couldn't resist! I mean, if I don't share stupid things with you, dear reader, who will?

And so, I present to you The Top Five Most Ridiculous Cults I Have Uncovered in the Past 24 Hours!

1. The Cult of Osho! In the 1960s and 1970s, an Indian "mystic" by the name of Rajneesh Chandra Mohan Jain, later known simply as "Osho" (which, come to think of it, sounds like it could be a Mario Bros character), began preaching against Gandhi, socialism, and organized religion, and in favor of free love (later earning him the nickname "the sex guru"). In 1981, he moved to the holy mecca of Oregon, and incorporated his own city, which he called Rajneeshpuram. Once there, Osho did what one would naturally expect from a religious leader—he amassed a huge collection of Rolls Royces, which he would use to travel around the small town, greeting cult followers, who lined up on the road to greet him. He led his followers in a ritual called OSHO Mystic Rose, in which devotees would spend a week laughing for three hours each day, then weep for three

hours a day the following week, and then spend the third week meditating. Variety!

Upon moving to Oregon, he embarked on a three-year period of silence, speaking only to his secretary, Ma Anand Sheela. In 1985, having broken his self-imposed code of silence, he predicted that over half of the world would die of AIDS. Accordingly, he required cult members wear condoms and (seriously!) rubber gloves while having sex, and to avoid kissing altogether. He also denounced Sheela, his secretary, and accused her of several less-than-holy activities, including attempting to kill nearby non-believers by contaminating several local restaurants' salad bars with salmonella, poisoning about 750 unfortunate lettuce eaters! Local law enforcement officials investigated, and the secretary and several others were convicted, but prosecutors failed to obtain convincing evidence of Osho's direct involvement. However, Osho was subsequently prosecuted for violating immigration laws and forced to leave the country. Sadly, this beloved holy man soon fell ill, and asserted that his ailments were the result of the U.S. government's attempt to kill him during his brief incarceration by forcing him to sleep on a mattress containing high levels of radiation. (Note to self: if our country enters into a world war, which leads to the rationing of candy and other items necessary for daily survival, and I get caught and arrested for violating said ration restrictions, BRING A SLEEPING BAG!) Osho died in 1990, at the age of fifty-eight. This salmonella-spreading, free-love-with-gloves cult attracted about 200,000 followers at its peak, proof that some people are even stupider than the lyrics to your average Earth Crisis song.

2. Rolls Royces are nice and everything, but that doesn't compare to being able to drink your cult leader's blood! Yes, welcome to the Unification Church, otherwise known as the Moonies! Founded in the 1950s by Sun Myung Moon, the Unification Church believes, shockingly, that Sun Myung Moon is the Messiah. The Moonies are perhaps best known for their mass weddings—upwards of

10,000 couples have been married at once. (Note to self #2: Seeing as how, although I'm not opposed to marriage, I've always found the idea of being on display in front of tons of people vastly unappealing (which, additionally, means that you'd have to buy me AT LEAST three bouncy castles to get me to ever perform in a band. No, actually, on second thought, not even that would do it, but anyways!), why not get married by Sun Myung Moon? It's hard to feel self-conscious when you're surrounded by 9,999 other couples!) Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the Moonies have discovered the best way to convert Maddy Tight Pants to religion! Yes, the Moonies give out candy! However, this is not just any candy. These tasty morsels are referred to as "the Blessing," and immediately upon consumption, the recipient experiences spiritual redemption. But there's a catch. Every piece of candy contains a trace amount of Sun Myung Moon's blood. Bloody candy! Dare I say...punk rock?! And lest you think that these offerings of candy are few and far between, I call your attention to a website of a current Moonie living in northeast Ohio, who writes about a recent successful candy evangelizing session: "I truly did not expect at first the 8,000 goal beforehand, but by that Sunday evening we were out of Holy Juice and Holy Candy and were well beyond our goal. This made a joyous sound unto the Lord!" Indeed! On a side note, during my extensive (read: late-night, caffeinated, Epoxies-induced) research, I came across several statements by gay rights' groups denouncing the Moonies for calling gay people "dirty dung-eating dogs," leading me to raise the following question: Is it really worth your time to denounce feces-related comments from a cult leader?

3. Onto the Children of God, aka the Family International! A charismatic sex freak named David Berg founded the cult in California in the 1960s. Most notably, its followers embraced a practice known as Flirty Fishing. Cult leaders instructed female members to attract men to the cult through flirting, and, if possible, mutual masturbation, or, ideally, sex. FFers, as they were known, were also used to generate money for the cult through

more straightforward prostitution. Cult leaders instructed women to keep detailed records of their conquests, and subsequently released a report in the late 1980s claiming that over 200,000 men (223,989 to be exact) had been "fished." That's a lot of cult sex! Additionally, members believe in "bridal theology," a peculiar set of teachings that encourages followers to fantasize during sex that their partner is Jesus Christ himself. (Note to self #3: Do not attempt this!) Sadly, cult leaders banned Flirty Fishing in 1987 due to concerns about contracting AIDS. (Topic for further investigation: Why are these cults so focused on HIV prevention?) To make matters more bizarre, in 1995 the new cult leader, Karen Zerby, introduced an exciting new concept called "the Loving Jesus Revelation," in which members, starting at age twelve, focus on the belief that Jesus wants to have sex with them. (Note: I swear I am NOT making this up!) A lot of their other beliefs are your standard end-times Christian fare (in other words, ridiculous, but in the way that the name "Screeching Weasel" is—after awhile you don't even notice how stupid it sounds) (and trust me, I'm only referring to the band NAME here!). Current enrollment in this masturbation-promoting cult? About 10,000!

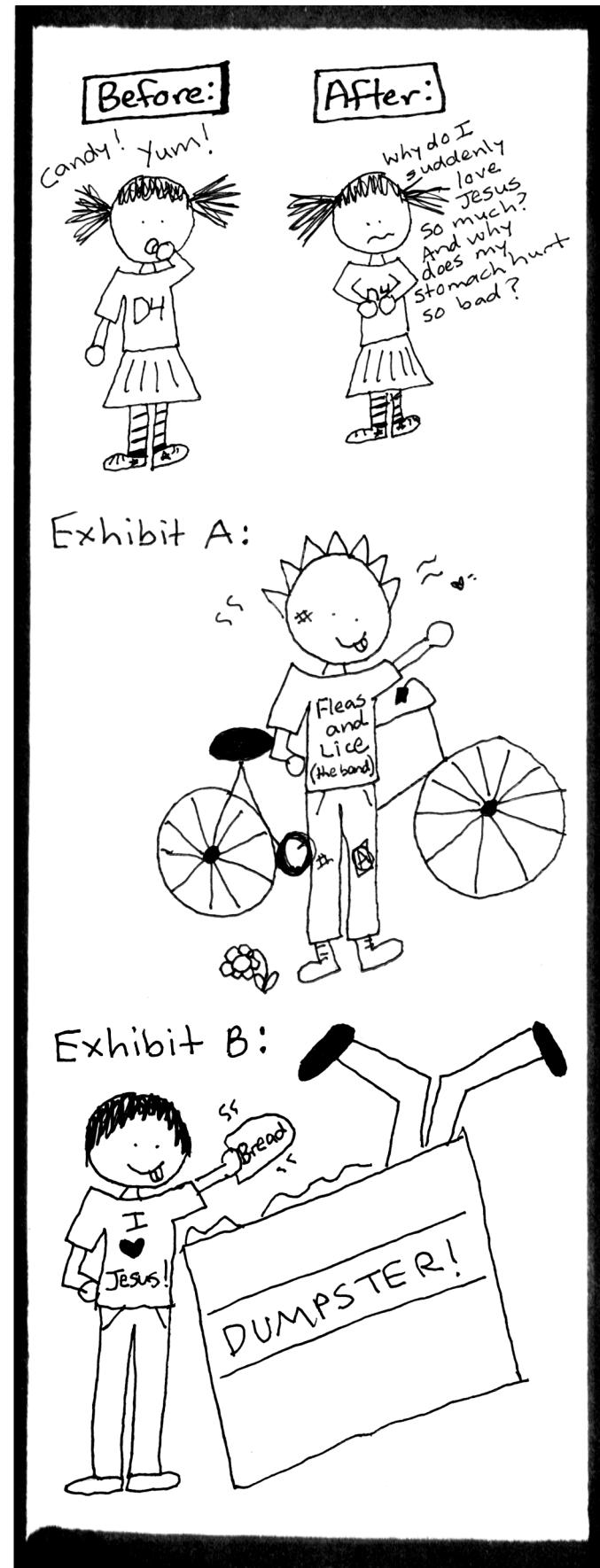
If you're going to believe in religion, why not pick the most interesting one you can find?

4. Ridiculous cult name alert! I present to you...the Ancient Mystic Order of Malchizedek! Yes, now let's explore even more bizarre belief systems! This cult's leader, an ex-convict by the surprisingly ordinary name of Dwight York, claims to have been born on the planet "Rizq" in "19th galaxy." The cult's members dress like cowboys, and, naturally, claim to be descended from Egyptians. Members live on a compound in Georgia, complete with forty-foot-tall pyramids and a giant sphinx. (Note to self #4: Personal pilgrimage the next time I get some vacation time?) Dwight has previously claimed that spaceships will land on Earth and pick up 144,000 lucky people. (This number comes from Revelations, and is used by a lot of religious groups, including some evangelical Christians.) Unfortunately, this prophecy was due to come true on May 5, 2003, and I couldn't find any new updates, so I'd recommend glancing towards the sky every few days, just in case.

5. Okay, so we've explored four cults, and gee, weren't they great, but, I know what you're thinking! Not ONE of these cults remotely resembles the lifestyle of your average traveling crusty punk! I know! I know! And that's why, in closing, I bring you...The Brethren! Founded in 1971 by an ex-Marine named Jim Roberts, this group of about one hundred believers leads a nomadic lifestyle, traveling around North America in small groups. They reject worldly possessions, don't have jobs, and don't watch TV. Sound familiar yet? And, according to one source, they "often carry backpacks and ride bicycles." (!) They have been known to live in vacant buildings! And, most importantly, one of their most central religious beliefs is...the importance of eating food from the garbage! Yes, dumpster diving! I swear to Jim Roberts that I am not making this up! This cult is so intriguing that I tracked down a memoir called *From Dean's List to Dumpsters: Why I Left Harvard to Join a Cult*, and am currently obsessively checking my mailbox in anticipation of its arrival. Future Razocake column devoted solely to this topic, including appropriately stupid crusty punk metaphors? Perhaps!

So there you have it! Five cults, each ridiculous in their own way! From pyramids to salad bars to Jesus sex, we have conclusively proven that, believe it or not, for some people believing that they are drinking the blood of Jesus (Catholicism) or living in the end-times (evangelical Christianity) is just not enough! And, really, if you're going to believe in religion, why not pick the most interesting one you can find? Especially if you get to give out tainted candy in the process! Punk rock!

-Maddy





**“But who am I
kidding? What
the eff do I
know?”**

(D)Arranged

My tits are debatable.

Their very existence is shrouded in mystery and speculation like the Yeti of the Himalayas or Scotland's Loch Ness monster. There have been alleged booby sightings during drunken groping episodes in the darkness of night, but those accounts are unreliable as they invariably involve severe levels of inebriation. All evidence suggests that I may be a biological anomaly. The lower half of my body is that of a woman with a booty and a certifiable cooter to match, but from my beer gut to my collarbone I resemble an eleven-year-old boy who prefers video games over sunshine.

What's the purpose of all this information, other than to reveal the Almighty's cruel hand in creating my vessel?

All of this is to offer context should I ever use the phrase, “Before I had even sprouted tits” to signify my childhood and hopefully you shan't immediately question “Wait? What? You've got tits?” I'm well aware of my lack of boobage, but more than a decade ago I entered the vast mindfuckery that is womanhood and began bleeding from my crotch and did, indeed, sprout *barely-A* boobs.

(An undergarment manufacturer wised up and realized that there was a small population of women who were ta-ta-deficient and produced bras with *barely* sizing for our *barely* funbags [I've never ever had a piece of writing where I used the word *funbags*, please allow me to use it now unapologetically.] Bras are literally sized *barely A*, which is lingerie code for “Who are you kidding?”)

But I digress.

* * * *

Let us take a moment to escape from our present reality and rewind to a time where I was a bigger nerdy thing than I am now. No, not sophomore year of high school when I published my first clichéd angst-ridden zine about getting detention or how my dog had “penis surgery.” Farther back, even before middle school where the Gods of Geekdom bestowed my first pair of prescription eyeglasses and a mouthful of metallic braces upon me. Let us climb into that rickety time

machine that is my memory and return to a time filled with Capri Sun juice pouches, Alvin & The Chipmunks, and Beverly Cleary books.

My childhood was typical, in that working-class-first-generation-refugee-immigrant-family kinda way. The act of growing up was an exercise in bi-cultural negotiations, trying to understand my folks and trying to get them to understand me. Even at a young age, I had an acute understanding that the life path I wanted to traipse down wasn't exactly aligned with their old-school expectations. Granted, my life goals at the time revolved around flipping Maniac Mansion and writing a series of stories about a white girl with curly, blond hair named Angela.

It was during this precious and precarious time of my young life that my father felt it was necessary to sit me down for a special talk about my future. When dad talks, I just listen. Sometimes I nod and look him in the eyes, but I mostly just stare off and hope he doesn't catch me mouthing “Shut up” over and over again.

Some children, by their very nature of being both extremely inquisitive and skeptical, can be an incredulous bunch. Especially those who spent their elementary school years learning fractions in math class and then going home to call utility companies to dispute billing discrepancies. Calling customer service representatives for my parents reversed our roles and thickened my skin. Even so, at the very least, I always have, and still do possess, unending respect for my folks, but that doesn't mean that I heed their words.

Dad began that talk with awkward references to my adulthood and how every decision I make will always reflect the family: my mother and father, ancestors, chickens we've raised, etcetera. Therefore, every decision I make should be in accordance to my family's guidelines. On this particular occasion, dad was briefing me on whom they expected me to wed.

“No white, no black, no Mexican,” he declared. He was on a roll and continued, “No Korean or Japanese. Just Chinese.”

Should I deviate from these expectations, my father, the man who is one-half of the awesome force that created this Monster of

Fun, said that on no uncertain terms will I remain a member of the family if I didn't marry a Chinese dude.

My dad threatened to disown me if I fell in love with the wrong ethnicity. “It will be as if I never had a daughter,” he emphasized. All this pressure, obligation, and ultimatum was suddenly thrust upon me, a kid who still pretended to be Adam West's Batman with a pink and yellow fanny pack as my utility belt. All of this nonsense being asked me *before I had even sprouted tits*.

I respect the man because he is my father. But my reverence for him is tempered by the fact that I know he's full of shit. In hindsight, my ten-year-old self should have looked him straight into his slanty eyes and asked, “You want me to bind my feet while I'm at it?”

* * * *

I'm learning, a lot.

I've learned more about south Asia and Islamic culture in the past three months than I had the entire twenty-seven years leading up to my arrival in Chittagong, Bangladesh where I am a volunteer teacher at the Asian University for Women's Access Academy. The work is grueling and exhausting, but I'm begrudgingly studying grammar so that I may teach it to my students. In between learning about state verbs and discovering that the word “like” can be used in six different ways, I was also enlightened to the fact that arranged marriages are still very popular in this region, even among some of my all-female student population.

Suffice to say that even though my moms and pops had some crazy notions about who and what they wanted me to become, they never presumed to choose my future life partner.

Even as I am armed with cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding, I'm still surprised that a discussion about how love marriages versus arranged marriages is still debatable in 2008. I divided a class in half and they took sides—all of the young women who were on the pro-arranged marriage team were actual proponents of the cultural relic so I knew they would defend it adamantly. As their teacher, I had to exercise impartiality and bit my tongue as they argued in favor



SELF PORTRAIT

The cultural crutch of tradition keeps people from standing on their own two feet, without wobbling ahead to make their own mistakes.

of letting someone else decide what's best for you. I can barely handle it when I'm not clutching onto the remote control as someone is flipping through channels on the TV set, no less have someone choose who I am supposed to make babies with.

The cultural crutch of tradition keeps people from standing on their own two feet, without wobbling ahead to make their own mistakes. The argument comes down to two basic tenets: 1) your parents love and care for you and would only desire the best for their child and 2) love makes you do dumb shit and you're not to be trusted by such an

overwhelming surge or emotion. While I agree with both sentiments on a superficial level, I'm unwilling to concede that breeders are innately superior decision-makers by virtue of their ability to reproduce and mistakes made within the fog of love are hard-won chapters in everyone's lives.

Even if love, that blinding swell of dementia that permeates every cell of your body, consumes you and makes you sink into abysmal chasms of despair—it also has the ability to make you float to euphoric peaks. The notion that one needs to be protected from it, to save them from themselves, bums me out.

But who am I kidding? What the eff do I know? Some of the things I love most are inanimate objects like Cilantro, my mixte bike, some pillows my mom made me, and Hamm's beer. Is my opinion to be taken seriously if I sincerely believe that Hamm's is the best tasting beer? Maybe some folks do need to be told what to like?

Not me though. Gimme a can of the stuff from the land of the sky-blue water any day.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com



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POWER POP POLICE

REV. NORB

BY MY RODLESSNESS YE SHALL KNOW ME:

So anyway, i'm at the record store last week, looking at all the vinyl i can no longer afford, and, proceeding merrily through the E section, i came across a copy of the ERGS! *DorkRockCorkRod* LP in all its bespectacled yellowness. I'm not looking to buy, having been amply graced with a lifetime supply of *DorkRockCorkRodage* by virtue of my creating what would ostensibly pass as the cover art for said album. Hey, SURE the art is kinda goofy lookin', but i maintain COMPLETE INNOCENCE in these matters, as they gave me two onerous restrictions under which i could not reasonably be expected to execute my duties to any effect other than goofiness ((which is, of course, the only effect actually ever available to me)): 1) No band photo on front cover; 2) No positioning the text in such a manner that the three K's in *DorkRockCorkRod* somehow look like they spell out "KKK" a la *dorkKrocKcorKrod* or the like. I'm like, WHAT??? NO KU KLUX KLAN REFERENCES ON AN ERGS! ALBUM COVER??? HOWEVER WILL THE SPIRIT OF THE BAND BE PROPERLY COMMUNICATED TO THE POTENTIAL CONSUMER??? FREEDOM CANNOT PROSPER WHILST THE ARTS ARE CONTINUALLY BEING CRUSHED NEATH THE BOOTHEEL OF SUCHEGREGIOUSLY RESTRICTIVE TYRANNY!!! ((and, speaking of "Institutionalized," does it strike anyone else as mildly disturbing that Tony Stark was listening to Suicidal Tendencies in the *Iron Man* movie? Like, i have yet to get my head completely around that concept. I guess i'm still reeling from the fact that i was forbidden to make the *DorkRockCorkRod* album cover art be a simulated Raymond Pettibon drawing of Mikey Erg decked out in a Klansman's robe crying broken-heartedly next to an amp with a sombrero on it at a purported Black Flag reunion. I even told the guys i would work faithfully from one of the many photographs available of Mikey Erg decked out in a Klansman's robe crying broken-heartedly next to an amp with a sombrero on it at a purported Black Flag reunion, but to no avail [[naturally, i then offered to alter the art to reflect Mikey Erg decked out in a Klansman's robe crying broken-heartedly next to an amp with a sombrero on it at a purported *Avail* reunion, but Mikey, still

crying, lit into me with some manner of heretofore undocumented kung fu moves {{which seemed more or less like "bullet time" versions of Dirt Bike Annie choreographed dance steps, if'n ya ask me}}, claiming that Avail never really broke up, and it was a trilby, not a sombrero, dammit. *From my lonesome spot in the Kraftwerk Chamber, i stand corrected!*])) In any event, all logic obviously out the window, i did what anyone else in my position would do ((not counting "stall for time," which is a given)): I decided to go with a rather literal interpretation of the *DorkRockCorkRod* concept, illustrating said Klanless mess with a pair of heavy-rimmed spectacles, a hunk of granite, a cork, and an ostensible pretzel... rod. And here, loyal reader, is where is where the Great Rod Betrayal™ sets forth: *The Big Box of Art Vol. 1 and The Big Box of Art Vol. 2* provided me with quite serviceable instances of a pair of dork-glasses, a hunk of granite, and a cork; my search for "pretzel rod," however, came up empty. Following the Words Of The Elders, i then whittled down my search terms to the more general "pretzel," which brought up the Icon of My Coming Shame: A brown, cylindrical pretzelated device which, in my defense, looked plenty roddish in the tiny thumbnail image yielded by my search. I mean, what the hell, man. It's like an inch high. LOOKED LIKE A FUCKING PRETZEL ROD, I TELL YOU. So anyway, the record comes out, and, as far as anyone intimately familiar with the project is concerned, the cover is duly emblazoned with an icon of dorkishness, a rock, a cork, and a rod. Verily the Bell, Book and Candle of the Modern Era. All is well. Even the most technically worrisome aspect of the graphics—typing the real name of somebody's long lost ex-girlfriend in the lyrics, then crossing it out to the point that no one can really read what's under the obscuration but the wounded party can know the name is really under there somewhere, requiring the obscuring scrawly image to be placed over the lyrics at the exact right place, and not have anything shift weirdly at the printer lest the scrawl and the name get misaligned and the Name of Forbiditude® be made clear to the public and the scrawly thing meanwhile merely obscure a few harmless prepositional phrases—goes off

HOW I CAME TO DEFRAUD THE YOUTH OF THE EARTH BY MEANS OF A POORLY DISGUISED PRETZEL STICK

with little hitch. Weeks pass. I am content in my handiwork, sombrero be danged. One fateful day, however, i receive an email from the ERGS! ((here's kind of a mildly amusing coincidence, i just got an email from Timbo from Mutant Pop® Records this week, i hadn't heard from the guy in like five years. He's actually getting the label back in gear, an event that i suppose i will have to address once i get my head around the fact that Iron Man™ listens to Mike Muir. In any event, Timbo sent along a new MP catalog, wherein he calls the ERGS! "the big dog" of today's pop punk pantheon. This is kinda funny because i first heard of the ERGS! through Timbo; i placed an order with him years ago and he tossed in a copy of their white 45 with the red letters, having [[correctly]] identified it as something i would probably like, though he, himself, did not [[not my cuppa" were his exact terms, and why i remember his exact words to this day i can't begin to tell ya]]. I believe the band had been using the 45 to unsuccessfully lobby for some kinda release on Mutant Pop [[no doubt one of the highly coveted "Mutant Pop Short Run CD-R Series" slots, surely the Nu-Disk® of a Your Generation!]]. Anyone inclined to track down a little errant ribaldry is urged to do the legwork and figure out exactly WHAT bands Timbo WAS releasing at the time he brushed off the ERGS!; i, of course, am far too gentlemanly to do so)) There is some debate on the internets as to the legitimacy of the pretzel's claim to ROD status. Accusations that the pretzel more closely resembles a STICK, not a rod, are flying ((for the uninitiated into the ways and terms of American Junk Food Culture, a pretzel STICK is a cylindrical pretzel that is only a few inches long; it's bigger than a toothpick, but much smaller than a crayon. I guess maybe bobby pin size? A pretzel ROD is similar in shape, but much larger—about the size of a drumstick. Which makes ya wonder why they're not drum RODS, but drummers are weird i guess so never mind)). They ask for clarification. *Have i, in fact, attempted to pass off a pretzel STICK as a pretzel ROD?* I tell them HAIL NO, i wouldn't do you boys like that! Why, just the implicit sexual metaphor of my rod being only a stick would be an incalculably vast divot in my fairway of cool! I tell the band that i am gwine to get

"Why, just the implicit sexual metaphor of my rod being only a stick would be an incalculably vast divot in my fairway of cool!"

WHAT??? NO KU KLUX KLAN REFERENCES ON AN ERGS! ALBUM COVER???



RYAN GELATIN

on the interwebs and set the kids a-right. I tell all who will listen that of COURSE it's a rod, that they're just imagining things, that the salt is just large-grained, how DARE they imply that i don't know a pretzel stick from a pretzel rod!!! Still, they make some pretty persuasive arguments. Yes, the end IS crimped, as one would find on a pretzel STICK, but not on a rod. With the lymph veritably freezing in my nodes, i go track down the pretzel clip art image that has inflicted all this bedlam and tumult in the pop punk scene. I am aghast. The image is tagged thusly: **Pretzel, snack, STICK.** I am undone. THE KIDS HAVE ASKED FOR A ROD, AND I HAVE GIVEN THEM A STICK. **MR. SALTY®, MR. SALTY®, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME???** I have spared the rod. I have spoiled the child. I live the subsequent years in shameful reclusiveness. Fast forward ((or rewind less)) to the present! I slide the vinyl copy of *DorkRockCorkRod* up out of its cohorts in the "E" section, and attempt to gain some manner of succor by seeing if the now-adjudicated STICK looks any more like a ROD now that the image has been blown up to fit a mighty album cover,

not a puny CD insert ((which, to be fair, might cast an en-stickifying effect over any legit rod depicted thereon anyhoo)). I am both shocked and amused to find out that my offending STICK has been replaced with a ROD of some sort. Not a pretzel rod, mind you, just a...rod. Now, while i am happy as a pig in shit to have the tangible evidence of my shame stricken from the public record, i still had to look at the new alleged ROD and think "well, goddammit, how do i know that THAT'S not a stick too?" I mean, it's just a greenish cylinder of some sort. There is no indicator of scale. As far as i can tell, it belongs to no known rod taxonomy ((although it does seem to be dripping some kind of green goop. Maybe it's a Goop Rod or something. Dammit, i was told NO band pictures, NO KKK references, and NO GOOP RODS! I claim cheating)). DAMMIT, THE KIDS WILL NOT STAND FOR HALF-MEASURES!!! They've been making do with a STICK for years now!!! America needs a ROD whose credentials and background cannot be impugned! To paraphrase Jimmy Cliff ((and later, Cub Koda)) LET YOUR ROD BE ROD,

America!!! I now must INSIST that *DorkRockCorkRod* be purchased in such quantities that the ROD spot on the cover become sort of a running joke, a la the Dead Kennedys' "Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables" back cover band pic! My suggestions are as follows: **3rd Pressing:** Tie Rod. **4th Pressing:** Piston Rod. **5th Pressing:** A-Rod. **6th Pressing:** Rod Serling. **7th Pressing:** Rod Flanders. **8th Pressing:** Rod Stewart. **9th Pressing:** Logo from ROD'S gay bar in Madison, which was cleverly designed to have extended descenders from the "R" and "S" capped off in penis heads ((circumcised)). **10th Pressing (Limited Edition):** Rod Stewart, Rod Flanders, and the ROD'S logo in a simulated double fellatio posture. **11th Pressing:** Ben Weasel's erect penis ((withdrawn when rod/stick argument is reopened)). **12th Pressing:** My erect penis. Oh, better make that a gatefold. Heyyy-oooooooo!!!

Maturely,
—Norb

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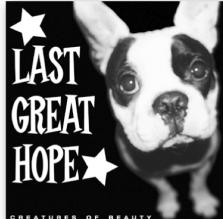
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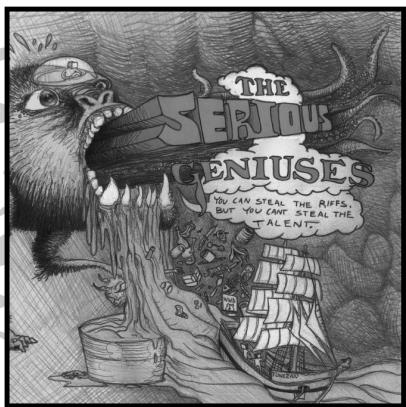


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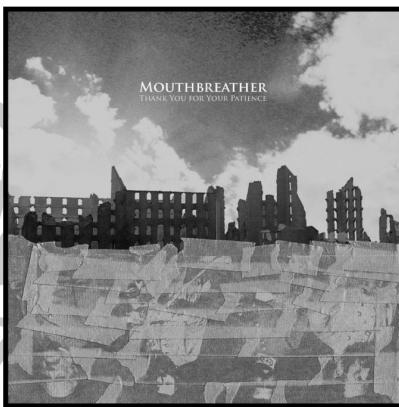
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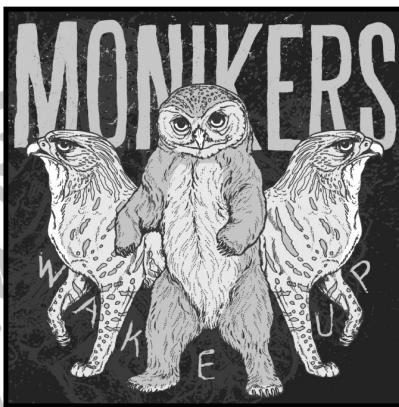
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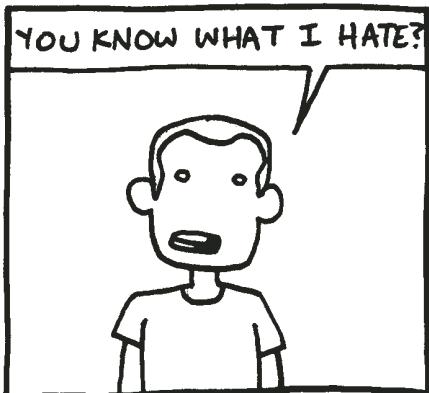
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SOMETHING GREAT!

by Mitch Clem





**Welcome to America.
Fill your tank. Eat
loads of meat.
You want beans
with that?"**

Wisconsinist Antics!

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

GIANT ANIMALS! GIANT ANIMALS!
Here it is, spring, in the Wisconsin northwoods, the most wildly anticipated four-day season we get, and all I can do is repeat, "GIANT ANIMALS! GIANT ANIMALS!" The days are longer. The trees are budding greens. The Lake Michigan beaches are slowly warming towards a tolerable testicular comfort level. The Wisconsin ladies are starting to (gasp!) show a little skin, and all I can say is, "GIANT ANIMALS! GIANT ANIMALS!" The local drive-in theater is open. The tourists are starting to pour in. Tall cool bottles of Blatz never tasted better in the hot sun, and all I can muster is...

(Okay, yeah yeah, we know. Giant animals! Big whoop. What's going on, Mr. Chicken? Has your trashy northwoods trailer been overrun by oversized critters? - F.F.)

Dinghole Report #93:
Chicken Rocks Giant Deer!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #415)

Last month, my friend JP and I drove down to Green Bay to run some errands. On the way there, we passed through the city of Sturgeon Bay. Not till recently had I been informed that Sturgeon Bay hosts the world headquarters of Whitetails Unlimited, an organization which protects the threatened interests of those who hunt the whitetail deer. Only recently had I inadvertently driven past said headquarters and was rather stunned to see a GIANT DEER statue in their front yard! This most majestic-looking steed is poised in a rather intense mid-air leap. What better place for a quick hit-and-run Chicken gig?

I pulled over into the ditch near the monstrous Bambi. JP, on his first ever Chicken roadie mission, helped lug my ailing drums up to the base of "Deerzilla." With military-like efficiency, I set up my sparkling blue weapon. A few cars slowed down as they passed, but then sped along on their way. JP waited in the ditch with my camera for proper photo documentation. I pulled on my ever-graying Chickenhead, reached for my drumsticks, and commenced with my opening drumroll.

Then, in sheer, brutal fashion, I detonated a most explosive rock display. My ruckus rhythms rocked the very foundation of my giant friend. Despite my particular fondness for venison sausage, I exhibited solidarity with this great beast! I paid honor to his very fight for survival with a most testifying tribute in riotous form: RUCKUS! Oh, what a sight! A gigantic leaping deer frozen in mid-air above a most animated chicken frantically drumming up a storm! In a matter of minutes, the concert was done, the drums were thrown back in my car, and JP and I were chuckling all the way down to Titletown.

[So, now you're performing in front of oversized images of other members of the animal kingdom? Mr. Chicken, I fear you're running out of tricks. – Dr. S.]

Once in Green Bay, we hit Fleet Farm, K-Mart, Joanes Sk8 Park, the record store, Rogan's Shoes, and the very necessary Jake's Pizza. Then we zoomed over to the Eagle's Club for a Concert Café reunion show. I initially planned on having the Chicken make a surprise (yeah, big surprise) appearance, but after a few beers I opted for enjoying the bands and chatting with old acquaintances. A few bands on the bill were the Bold Ones, The Jetty Boys, the Midwest Beat, and the Tantrums. They were all great, but the one band that really tweaked my beak that night was Holy Shit! These guys simply exploded into a spastic string of blazing hardcore punk numbers. Stellar. Having a song dedicated to Brett Favre was the cherry on the birdseed. He taught Ben Stiller how to act, indeed!

(Okay, Chickenpants. I'm waiting for more of this so-called "giant animal" action. – F.F.)

One week later, I was granted another week off from work for yet another trip. I was returning to Kansas City for the wedding of my old friend Paul Ackerman (a drummer who can really kill the kit!). I spent one night in Milwaukee for a roller derby-related romantic interlude.

[(Oooooooooooooo weeee-woooooo-weeeeeee-woooooooooooo!!! – Dr. S. & F.F.)]

...aaaand then caught a plane to the barbecue capitol of the Midwest. It was great being back in KC. I religiously inhaled the barbecue from Oklahoma Joe's for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Oklahoma Joe's is by

far the best barbecue in the world, and the restaurant is IN A GAS STATION! To me, this defines American culture, the kind of American culture I'm proud to embrace. Welcome to America. Fill your tank. Eat loads of meat. You want beans with that?

(Yeah, yeah. Okay. Now where's the giant animal? – F.F.)

Patience, Funyuns! So, the wedding day was upon us. I helped Byron load up the P.A. and my substitute Chickenkit for the evening's ruckus. We soon found ourselves at the Simpson House, a rather fancy little mansion rented out for the big event. Paul and Lauren were up there in front of friends, family, and Favre, committing the crime of marriage. The Boulevard Wheat Beer and Miller High Life were soon in heavy flowage. Seeing as how Paul is an ol' Green Bay boy, there were many Wisconsinites at the wedding. With Wisconsinites come Wisconsinist antics! A few gentlemen and myself carried our folding chairs out to the road near the driveway. It was time for a wedding roadsit! Paul later strolled down to the roadside saying "What's this? A Kansas City roadsit and you didn't even invite the groom?" Soon, there were fifteen roadsitters out there hoisting their beers to passing cars.

[Well then, so there was a little Wisconsin wedding in downtown Kansas City. How sweet. By chance were there any... GIANT ANIMALS? – Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #94:
Chicken Rocks Giant Panda!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #416)

Meanwhile, back in the Simpson House, famed honky tonk singer Rex Hobart (who happened to be the best man) was entertaining the crowd with his wit and his six-string. Suddenly, from the far side of the stage, there erupted a tumultuous thunder. With a dress shirt, tie, and Chickenhead, I rolled out the ceremonial drum roll. The wedding reception attendees began to gather around in slight confusion as my call to arms heralded all attention to the stage. With a biting snare crack, the intro was complete and my wings were raised skyward to mild applause. I then leapt into my typical ruckus routine, pounding the skins in the time-tested fashion with the Chicken ears flopping about wildly. Everything seemed to be quite



MICHAEL FORRESTER

So, now you're performing in front of oversized images of other members of the animal kingdom?

similar to most Rhythm Chicken wedding performances (minus the nudity) until what happened just next.

Just as my spirited maniacal drumming began to thunder through the mansion, that very thunder was STOLEN by a GIANT PANDA!!! Almost as if in a dream, this HUGE panda (and a rather goofy cartoon-looking panda at that) suddenly dances out onto the dance floor, directly in front of my rhythm ruckus! WHAT THE...? Well, the place went absolutely APESHIT! Kids gathered around to witness the funny-looking panda dancing in front of the drumming chicken. Bridesmaids lined up to dance with the panda, and my rocking chicken rhythms rolled on. This really made no sense, which, with my friends, made all the sense in the world. I noticed that Rex was now playing along on the electric bass. The pianist at the grand piano even joined in. The Chicken gig had somehow morphed into a surreal three-ring circus!

After a few beat switches and rhythm medlies, I halted again to raise my wings valiantly. The place erupted in confused applause. The giant panda motioned for me to keep rolling, so I rocked out a few more doses of badass Chickenrock. The giant panda danced with the bride in front of the Rhythm Chicken, a truly

priceless sight. Beneath that Chickenhead, and with a belly full of beer, I was smiling intensely. The Chicken gig had become yet another one for the books. Nicely done.

(Giant panda! Bravo, Rhythm Chicken! Jolly good show, I do say! – F.F.)

After raising my wings to applause a final time, then things got weirder.

[Weirder? I can't imagine how. – Dr. S.]

Well, I thought my show was done, but Rex Hobart leans over and tells me to follow his lead. Follow his lead? Like play an accompaniment... like as a member of a...band? Now, it takes a truly exceptional situation for the Rhythm Chicken to share the stage with anyone, but when honky tonk star Rex Hobart asks me follow his lead, how can I refuse? It was my first... collaboration... since I shared the stage with lounge singer Vern Nussbaum at Wisconsin's Gordon Lodge cocktail lounge back in '99. I straightened my feathers and listened in earnest.

This is when Rex, on the bass, started playing a bluesy funk bass line. The pianist kicked in and it was apparently my turn. I shakily supplied a barely adequate back

beat. Funk? A band? The Rhythm Chicken playing in a band? It was indeed a bizarre scenario, for the panda continued to dance about. A few minutes later the rag-tag *jam session* was over. It was an honor to perform with Rex (and the giant panda!), but I walked away with a somewhat confused opinion of the whole funk band honky tonk petting zoo thing that just happened. Later, the guy in the panda suit was holding a bottle of wine in one oversized paw, and his human hand was sticking out the suit's neck hole holding a cigarette. The giant dancing, smoking, drinking panda was something I'll never forget. The Rhythm Chicken had been eclipsed. If you wish to view the oddity yourself, search "Rhythm Chicken" on YouTube and pick the KC wedding one. It's an ear-tweaker.

(Okay, Chicken. The giant panda was rather cool. Can we expect any other Rhythm Chicken duets in the future? Any more giant animal collaborations? Are you gonna play in the mouth of the worlds largest musky in Hayward, Wisconsin? - F.F.)

Hmmmmmmmm, perhaps.

–Rhythm Chicken
rhythymchicken@hotmail.com





"What are you paving the roads with, for chrissakes? Gold bullion and American bald eagles?"

The Long and Short Intestine of It All

When it comes to vacation, it usually includes some sort of travel. Enter early May of this year with an exceptionally crammed vacation resulting in Yvonne and I packing three major cities into one week: Chicago, Cleveland, and NYC. We got our behinds on the big silver bird mondo early Friday morning, tearing ass into the smog-filled skyline outta the LAX rat nest, and looked forward to our first vacation plop-down in Chicago, land of Pegboy and pizza puffs.

You haven't reached absolute Zen until you've discovered the mystery of the pizza puff. Think of a thick, Pop Tart-sized cartridge made of flaky filo dough that's stuffed with pizza filling oozing with meaty goodness and cheese. But it gets much better. That cartridge of Satan then gets dropped into a deep fryer to accelerate its supernatural appeal. *Ahem*, where were we? Right.

Yvonne and her funny-as-hell cousin David were chosen as godparents for their newest niece Maya, so we got to stay with Maya's parents Monica and Carlos (South Siiide!) while we were there for the baptism. Besides Monica and Carlos, all of Yvonne's relatives on her ma's side are in Chi-town, so it's *always* a fun time when we get to go out there. Beside everyone coming out, we got to visit with Yvonne's parents who also flew out from Vegas, so it was all good.

Now, I know what you're thinking: So just what didn't you ingest/force down while you were there, homie? You really wanna know? Yeesh, let's see... the aforementioned pizza puffs (yes, plural), Gino's East Pizza (with fillings that run deeper than the secrets of man!), American Bagel Company (who concoct ridiculously unhealthy aortic stoppage like blueberry and apple streusel bagels with enough sugar to make a diabetic cringe like a vampire to a crucifix), Portillo's beef sandwiches 'n fries (Homer: Mmm...extra wet...ahmmm), heaped-on diner breakfasts that shouldn't be legal to begin with, and enough Chicago Dogs to satisfy a ginourmous crowd of Cubs fans at Wrigley Field.

Ah yes, and this was only the first few days of our week. Patience, short and long intestines—there is much, much more to be thrown your way. Yvonne and I also got the chance to catch up with our own Megan Pants at her place of servitude, The Bleeding Heart Bakery, probably one of the most unique bakeries in all of Chicago. My favorites were

the cayenne and black pepper cookies laced with cinnamon and ground cocoa. I gotta say that these were some of the greatest chocolate cookies that I've ever put away.

While driving around in our rented (and 100% insured) Chevy HHR, I took the liberty of fucking around on the way back to Monica and Carlos' house one evening and tried veering into a puddle the size of a small pond along the boulevard. I soon remembered how big the potholes in Chicago can be the moment we got midway into the water and felt the rear of our vehicle bottom out about two or so feet, the underside banging hard against the edge of the pothole. Before we got back to the house, the tire pressure light came on and I figured I probably jarred the rear sensor loose (or off), so Carlos and I checked out the wheels before going in. Everything looked cool, so we called it a night.

The next morning, I went outside and, sure enough, the rear wheel was stone flat. Being we were gonna switch our car out at the rental place anyway that morning (the right speakers were blown and feeding back—no, I didn't do that), we drove it to the corner to try some fix-a-flat spray, but as soon as I tried, the inside of the wheel started to hiss. Damn faulty wheels. Three cheers for insurance! We finally got back to the rental place, and not only do we get an upgrade for my joyriding mischief—I mean trouble—but we get a shrewd ride installed with Sirius satellite radio. Nice! I wonder what kind of upgrade we would have scored had I raced that pile of HHR poo into Lake Michigan? Next time.

Monday afternoon we said our farewells to everyone, got our GPS dialed in, and set our sights for Cleveland. Now, I gotta note here, as would any other people or bands that have traveled across the I-80 from Chicago to Ohio: there's a ridiculous amount of toll booths, especially when cruising through Illinois to Indiana to Ohio. What are you paving the roads with, for chrissakes? Gold bullion and American bald eagles? And the people operating these booths run on two speeds: shitty and shittier.

Well, I take that back. The one lady in Sandusky was pretty cool after we hit her up if there was a Cracker Barrel restaurant off the beaten path we saw listed on our GPS. I've always wanted to chow down at one of these places after hearing from Yvonne how the

one she partook at in Alabama really doled it out, not to mention that these places were the norm pit stops for the Ramones when they used to tour the states (and used to trade LPs and signed promo pics for meals, according to manager Monte Melnick's book). Toll Booth Lady says there's one a couple miles off the expressway, but it might be closed and there are other places to eat around it. "Cool," we think, and head off down a two-lane road that looks like something straight out of the movie *Gummo*, and it's pretty dark outside, to boot. Swell. We finally get to a built-up part of town and discover the Cracker Barrel is shut down for the night, but see that the Steak 'N Shake (think Bob's Big Boy) is open, so we head in to grab some burgers. After settling in and getting our food, I'm looking around and confirm my suspicions of *Gummo* flashbacks to Yvonne while taking in an eyeful of the local patrons. If you're from Sandusky and are getting pissed off reading this, that's too fucking bad—I didn't dress you or cut your hair, Sandusky did, so sue me.

We scram on into Cleveland late at night, check into our hotel that my sister Julie was so kind to hook us up with (right on, Sis), and got settled in. The next morning, we get up fairly early to get a head start on The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum. Big thanks must be given here to Mr. Howard Kramer, one of the main curators of this monstrous museum collective. Howard is a good friend of my pal Jeff Fox (editor of *Barracuda* magazine), and he was kind enough to get Yvonne and me in after a heads-up phone call from our homie Jeff. To say that this place has something for every music fan or freak is an understatement. I know that I've gone on record saying that there are quite a few so-called artists and bands (idiots and morons) that shouldn't be inducted in this place, and I still stand by this wholeheartedly. But there are scads of artists and bands there that actually do deserve to be noted.

The museum has five different floors of actual musical swag ranging from a ton of Elvis, Beatles, Hendrix, and Doors relics, to some of my own personal faves, like the hat and costume that David Bowie wore in his *Ashes to Ashes* video. It was all I could do to not reach across the velvet ropes and put that long, grotesque hat on and start singing "Scary Monsters! Super Freaks!" security be damned. One of Buddy Holly's really old



YVONNE GOMEZ

If you're from Sandusky and are getting pissed off reading this, that's too fucking bad—I didn't dress you or cut your hair

Magnatone amps was in there, too, alongside one of his old suits. Even one of Keith Moon's undestroyed kits sat in there. Crazy insane. The really neat stuff (to me, anyway) was in the Ramones glass case upstairs with some old photos, flyers, and Johnny's white Mosrite, yes, *thee* battered white Mosrite that he had from 1977-'96. I was relieved to find out that the guitar belonged to Daniel Rey (Ramones producer) and not that douchebag Eddie Vedder as previously rumored. Other punk rarities included the original John Holmstrom artwork from the back cover of the Ramones' *Rocket to Russia* LP and the shattered bass guitar straight from the cover of The Clash's *London Calling* record. No matter what kind of music you're into, that museum has it all. It's a highly recommended stop if you're ever pulling though there.

After closing out the museum, we lucked upon one of Yvonne's fave chef's restaurants from *The Food Network* called Lola nearby, owned by Michael Simon. We grabbed two seats at the bar after finding out we could

order the full menu there. While putting away some of the best steak and pork chops (with the most fantastic cheesy polenta!), the bartender who we'd been chatting with was impressed to find out that we knew of the special breakfast dessert here: brioche French toast with a handmade vanilla maple syrup and bacon ice cream. Oh. My. Lord. We told our barkeep to pass on the rave reviews of the menu to his boss who wasn't there, and headed back to our hotel.

The next morning (after finally getting my Cracker Barrel fill) we jammed through Ohio-Pennsylvania-New Jersey-New York and ended the eight-plus hour drive into the Big, Rotting Apple to meet up my sister Julie, who, besides letting us crash at her pad, was able to take off a couple days to hang out. The next night, after hitting up another one of Yvonne's *Food Network* fave's restaurants on the Lower East Side, Mr. Aaron Sanchez's Paladar (some of the greatest high-end Mex in the city!), I called up my Brooklyn pal, Dean Rispler (ex Go-Kart Records employee

and producer extraordinaire) to hang out. We all met up along with Dean's friend Chris (drummer of the mighty Bamboo Kids, who has excellent taste in drumming influences), and end up capping out to Williamsburg to pay Mr. Larry May of The Candy Snatchers a visit at the bar he's been working at since he moved up to NY a few months ago. It was great catching up with everyone as Larry continued to get everyone schnockered into the early hours of the morning. After getting a train back to the city (and taking pics with people passed out on the train platforms), we crashed into the afternoon hours. The next day the rain was harsh, so we stayed near Julie's neighborhood before packing our shit up for the flight back on Saturday. Thanks to everyone who put us up and put up with us. I haven't been that exhausted and had as good a time in quite some while.

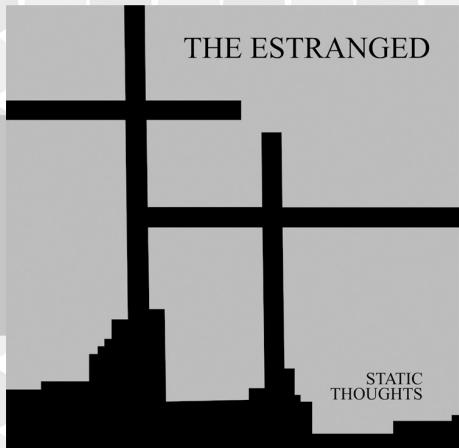
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(IN ACTION)

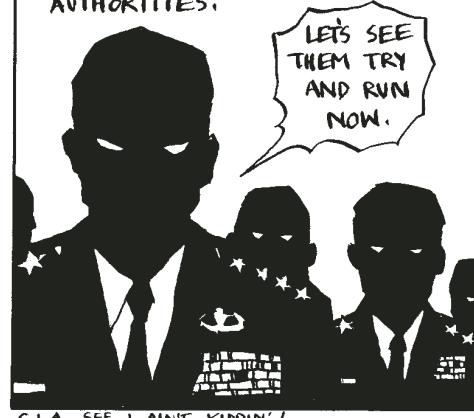
BY KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA

DO YOU DRESS LIKE AN IDIOT?

I'M TALKING ABOUT HOW YOU WEAR YOUR PANTS.



IF THIS IS YOU, DON'T FEEL BAD. YOU ARE A VICTIM OF A SECRET C.I.A. CONSPIRACY TO CONTROL UPSTARTS LIKE YOURSELF. THIS FASHION STATEMENT WAS LEAKED INTO URBAN AREAS KNOWING IT WOULD BE ADOPTED BY YOUTH OF A REBELLIOUS NATURE. THE LOW RIDING PANTS PRECARIOUSLY HANG ON THE BODY, BARELY FINDING PURCHASE ON THE KNOB OF THE FRONTAL PUBIC REGION. THE C.I.A. CALLS THIS 'RESTRAINING APPAREL' BECAUSE IT SLOWS PEOPLE DOWN IF THEY TRY AND FLEE FROM AUTHORITIES.



BAD
TO THE
BONE!!

DON'T GET ME WRONG, I KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE FASHIONABLY CURRENT. JUST BECAUSE I'M PUSHING FIFTY DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T BE HIP TO THE TOTALLY RADICAL STYLES OF TODAY'S YOUNG DUDES. I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO UNTUCK MY SHIRT A FEW TIMES. HERE IS A DRAWING OF A SKULL. IT MEANS I AM EDGY AND ALTERNATIVE JUST LIKE YOU.





**"Shaft and
South Park and
Scientology."**

Nardwuar vs. Justice

the Human Serviette

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Xavier De Rosnay: I'm Xavier from Justice.

Nardwuar: And Xavier, who do you have beside you?

Xavier: Gaspard (Augé) from Justice.

Gaspard Augé: Hi.

Nardwuar: Welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Xavier: Thanks.

Nardwuar: So here you are in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, at the Commodore Ballroom. What do you want to see in Canada?

Xavier: Happy people and fun and tears and blood and sweat.

Nardwuar: Is there anything you're looking forward to seeing in Canada?

Gaspard: Mmm, yeah, I guess so. Maybe maple syrup.

Nardwuar: Also in France, we have a famous Canadian artist who's been hanging out in France for a little while. Do you know who that might be?

Xavier: We have a lot, actually. Like, the biggest French singers are all Canadian singers. You know, we have, Garou, Celine Dion... Yeah, like all the biggest French singers are always from Quebec.

Nardwuar: And how do they do? Are they any good?

Gaspard: Yeah.

Xavier: Yeah. I mean, even if we don't like their music, there is no smoke without a fire, and even if they are popular—that means not quite good, in a way.

Nardwuar: When somebody goes into a Justice concert and they look at the stage, what might be shining, really, in their face?

Both: Our teeth.

Xavier: Yeah, yeah. Our teeth! And, uh... No, but like visual-wise, we just keep it like really raw and simple. We just use white lights in a really simple way. We don't have any images, any projections or any lasers, or whatever. And we have a glowing cross.

Nardwuar: The glowing cross. And I was thinking, Justice, you guys love rock'n'roll, and you love rock'n'roll history, don't you?

Xavier: Yeah. Well, not like encyclopedias of rock'n'roll, but we do like it a bit, yeah.

Nardwuar: You sample. You're down with history. So I was thinking, I wonder, could this be, could this be, the inspiration right here? Is this right here, the inspiration...

[Nardwuar pulls out an Isaac Hayes record]

Both: Oh yeah, yeah.

Nardwuar: Could you hold this up and please examine—what is this, and is this the inspiration perhaps, Justice, for... What is going on here?

Xavier: You got it. It's Isaac Hayes' *Black Moses*.

Gaspard: This is why we decided to make the cover artwork, like, to do the folding cross inside the CD.

Xavier: The limited edition is just folded like this. And, actually, the first idea we wanted to do, was to just put Gaspard here in the corner just like this, just like Jesus. But then we thought we should do something a bit less referenced and a bit more simple. But, yeah, again, it is fun because I think you are the first one to notice it.

Nardwuar: And it's a great album, too. And, of course, Isaac Hayes, the Chef [on *South Park*], he goes on in popular culture, too.

Gaspard: Like Shaft and *South Park* and Scientology. All those things. [laughs]

Nardwuar: So, when I walk into a Justice concert I'm kind of thinking of *Black Moses*. I'm thinking it's a cool party for "Black Moses," for Isaac Hayes.

Gaspard: And I am yellow Moses and he's like a white Moses.

Nardwuar: Justice, did you guys once play a gig with 2 Live Crew?

Xavier: I think we did one, but they were not with Luke Skyywalker anymore because he left 2 Live Crew. It's a bit like having The Rolling Stones without Keith Richards or Mick Jagger. But we didn't see them. Maybe it was cool. I don't know.

Nardwuar: So, what's the etiquette on that, Justice? You're playing a gig and playing with a band. Do you always stick to the end of the gig?

Gaspard: You mean our gig?

Nardwuar: The whole gig. If there's other bands, do you stick around?

Both: No, no.

Xavier: No, we don't. Actually, it's funny, but we don't like concerts. We don't like to go to concerts and stuff. It has to be like really—not really "good," because there's no bad or good or whatever; it is so subjective—but it has to really touch us. Which is really difficult with concerts. But there are, like, some concerts and some

bands we saw like twenty times last year because we love them, like DJ Fancy—that we bring here to support.

Gaspard: Cornelius as well.

Nardwuar: Justice, another thing I was wondering about. You have the song "Phantom," don't you?

Xavier: Yep.

Nardwuar: I was wondering about the inspiration behind the song "Phantom." What can you tell people about the band Goblin and the song "Phantom" by Justice? [Nardwuar shows Justice a Goblin 8 Track.]

Xavier: Okay, we're going to tell you, like, a big secret. We don't know any other song by Goblin than the one we sent Bert (Libeert from Goose) to do "Phantom." It's funny, because we just heard that track played by Kevin Skiff at a party, and we were just like "Shit, we have to do something that sounds the same." And we just came to him and said, "Okay, give me your CD so we can listen to it and try to do something that sounds a bit similar." And we just listened to the song, and we just thought, "Okay, let's make it simple." Because sometimes it's better to do something straight with the original and sample it, more than trying to do something that sounds a bit like this, or that's fishy, or whatever. It's fun because, like, maybe one month after we released "Phantom," it seemed that everyone knew about Goblin, you know? And it's funny because we had people coming to us and say like, "Yeah, I know where you took your sample for 'Phantom!'" It's taken from Dario Argento." We're, like, "Okay, no, you don't get it. Like Dario Argento is a director and this is music from one of his movies. But everyone pretended they knew Goblin, and it was kind of fun. But, to be honest, we didn't know Goblin before and we still don't know it.

Nardwuar: That's why I was wondering where you had knowledge of a Goblin eight-track, but you got it from the films rather than the actual music.

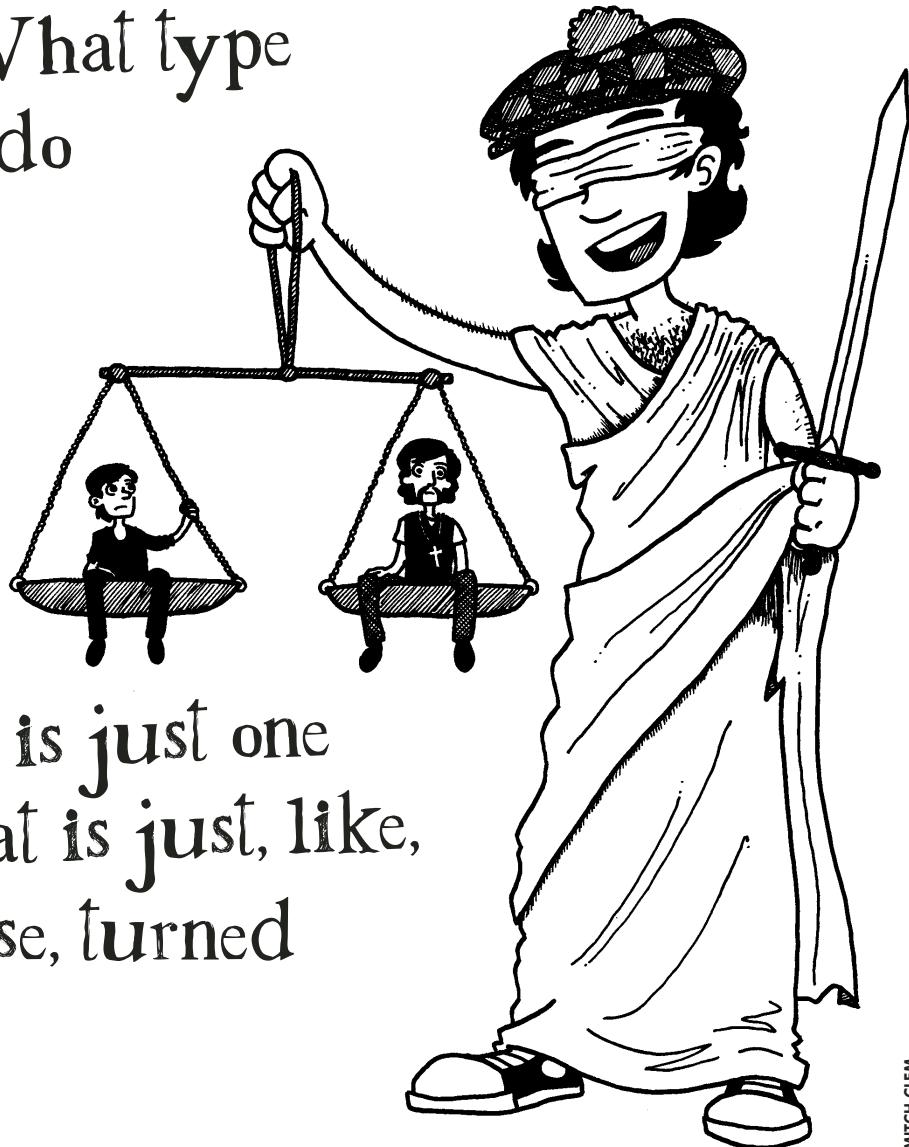
Xavier: Yep. Can we keep that? Is it a present?

Nardwuar: Perhaps. We'll negotiate.

Xavier: Is it a present? I just want to know before we continue the interview. Is that a present?

Nardwuar: We'll continue on with the interview and decide later. Because there are

Nardwuar: What type of horse meat do you like?



Xavier: There is just one horse meat; that is just, like, just dead horse, turned into meat.

some other important things here, Justice, to talk about. And the thing is, I'm not quite sure, Justice, if it's time to take the Goblin eight-track.

Xavier: What are you going to do? I take it. And so.

Nardwuar: What am I going to do? What would you do!

Xavier: Nothing. I would just say, like, "Thank You."

Gaspard: I think I would hit him with the mic.

Nardwuar: Okay, I'll let you hit him with the mic.

Gaspard: No, no.

Xavier: It's okay. We won't take it.

Nardwuar: But there's another important band I wanted to ask you about. These guys — The Brothers Johnson.

Xavier: Are you a stalker or what?

Nardwuar: What can you tell the people about The Brothers Johnson? Because, from what I understand, you guys sample The Brothers Johnson.

Xavier: Yeah, okay. So, like, the other big sample of the album—the first one was Goblin and that is the other one. So we took

it ("You Make Me Wanna Wiggle"), and then after we get the thing done, we realized that Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones and Rod Templeton are involved in this record. And we did sample a song written by Rod Templeton—and for the people who don't know, he's the guy who wrote "Thriller" and lots of stuff for Michael Jackson. We call them "prison samples"—things you sample, and if you get caught, you go to prison. And this is what is, maybe, going to happen. But it's cool. We don't regret it. The track is cool and all.

Nardwuar: These guys are amazing. The Brothers Johnson is the rhythm section, or the bassist guy, who played on all the Michael Jackson hits. Like, this is incredible! And you have him on your record now.

Xavier: Yeah, yeah, it's true. That's why it sounds good.

Nardwuar: Justice, when you guys do a remix, do you get to hear all the tracks that are on the remix?

Gaspard: Yeah. The funny thing is that we did remixes sometimes without knowing the original. It's always better to begin

with a clear mind and without knowing the original.

Nardwuar: What's it like when you do the remix? Like, do you hear stuff that was never intended to be heard at all? Do you hear weird things? What do you hear that's kind of interesting?

Xavier: It depends. There are two schools of people; some people who give you just the good takes. Everything is, like, really EQed and compressed, so everything is really clean. And some people are too lazy to make it, and are just giving you everything that was in the session of the track they did, so then you have, like, outtakes. Like really bad...

Nardwuar: Like, do you hear Britney Spears outtakes or Justin Timberlake outtakes or N.E.R.D. outtakes? I mean, you've had access to remixing these people. What sort of neat stuff do you hear on a Britney tape?

Xavier: Just amazing a capella. Actually, this was the most amazing a capella we've ever had. It was really cool. It sounded really good. But because they are very professional and they don't let anything bad come out. We just had vocal takes that were amazing.

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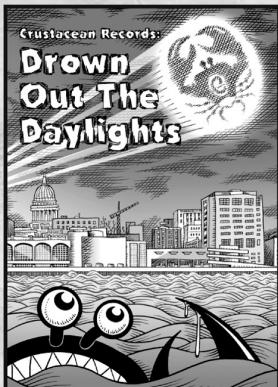
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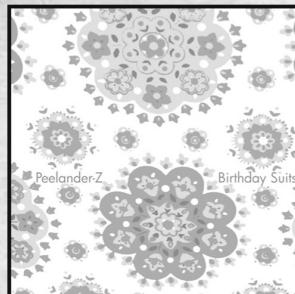
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Nardwuar: You guys are really daring, you know, Justice, because with the Justin Timberlake track ("LoveStoned") didn't you guys slightly change it off-tempo a bit?

Gaspard: Not off-tempo.

Xavier: For us, when we did that remix, we didn't know the original track.

Nardwuar: But, I mean, basically you screwed with Justin Timberlake. That's amazing. You

Xavier: Bruni.

Nardwuar: What can you say about Sarkozy's wife? She's a singer!

Gaspard: She is a famous model. She is a former model.

Xavier: And she's a singer now. It's been like five or six years that's she been a singer. It's been a long time that we didn't go to France, so we don't really know what happens. But

same amount, so just do something else!" That's what we say.

Nardwuar: No mics for the DJs then?

Gaspard: No.

Nardwuar: What do you think about that, guys that have mics going, "All Right! All Right!" like, for instance, DJ Funk? You've played some gigs with DJ Funk, haven't you?

Xavier: Are you a stalker or what?



weren't afraid to really kind of change it.

Gaspard: We didn't know.

Xavier: It was just the natural order.

Gaspard: It was more logical to do it this way, so...

Xavier: When we were just listening to the a capella, we're just like [snaps his fingers a bit]. For us, it was just the natural way to put the voices on. And when we discovered the original one, which is not the same rhythm, not the same groove, first we just thought, "Oh shit, it sounds so weird," the original. Because, for us, it was not natural. And then we thought, like, "All right, so did we just get this thing off-tempo?" And they just didn't care. They were just saying, like, "Yeah, it's cool. Thank you very much!" And they didn't tell us, "Guys, this is not the real tempo." And that's what's cool about these remixes—you have a million ways to use voices or instruments or stuff. You can do whatever you want and it's possible to make cool things with bad stuff or to make bad stuff with cool things. There's always a million ways to do your thing.

Nardwuar: Justice, are you good at mixing anything else? Like, are you good at mixing soup or cake, or anything like that?

Gaspard: Yeah, sure. This is where we started, actually.

Nardwuar: What kind of stuff have you made? What kind of soup or cake or batter have you made?

Xavier: I'm really good at a lot of stuff, you know. I love cooking. I do crêpes, stuff like this. I can do pretty much anything when it's about cooking.

Nardwuar: Do you like horse meat?

Xavier: Yeah, I do.

Nardwuar: What type of horse meat do you like?

Xavier: There is just one horse meat; that is just, like, just dead horse, turned into meat. And it's really good, yeah. It's a bit touchy in France to eat horse because horse is like a friend of human beings. [laughs] But I like it. It's just really good. Raw horse meat is really good.

Nardwuar: I was curious, Justice, you have a new president called...

Xavier: Nicolas Sarkozy.

Nardwuar: And Sarkozy has a really interesting wife. Her name is Carla...

it seems a lot of people are upset that he's marrying a model. But I just want to tell all these people, like, "Man, you have a model who wants to marry you. You would do it. So, no worries." Because this guy is, like, really small. He doesn't look really good, you know? But then he has the opportunity of marrying this model because he was president of France. Don't lie to yourself. If you can marry a model because you're president, just do it, you know?

Nardwuar: What's her music like? Would guys ever remix Carla Bruni?

Gaspard: No, but there is a kind of joke in France about her voice, because she is singing very quietly. There is a kind of running gag of her. When you are going to see her live, she's like [silence]—she's singing like this, you know?

Xavier: I don't even know about this gag. It's cool though.

Nardwuar: Justice, what is the proper song length, do you think? Because legendary American songwriter Wesley Willis, he said, "No song should be over two minutes and fifty seconds." What do you think about that?

Xavier: I think he's right. Maybe I would say, like, three minutes and ten seconds. But it's really hard to stick on that. Actually, if we could have done just an album with three-minute songs, we would do it. Our first album, we tried to make some kind of disco album where all the tracks are linked together and stuff. And just the gaps take a long time and sometimes we'd have to extend the tracks to include new moods that can bring to the next track. And that's why sometimes we did tracks that were like four minutes. But I think the longest track we ever did was five minutes.

Nardwuar: Do you guys speak much when you're on stage? How much speaking should there be at a rock'n'roll concert?

Gaspard: Uh, we do speak. We don't have mics, so nobody can hear us.

Xavier: But we do speak to each other just to be sure that we don't do conflicting moves while making music on stage. The talking we'll have is really easy, like, okay "We're moving to eight bars," or "Don't do that, because I'm fucking doing that at the

Xavier: Yeah, it's cool, but we don't DJ, you know? We play live, so we don't need mics. DJ Funk is good, but you have to be a rock star to do that, and we are not.

Gaspard: We are not really good MCs.

Nardwuar: Also, you have the amps up there. How many amps are up behind you? How many Marshall stacks are there?

Both: Eighteen.

Nardwuar: Any significance on that number at all, being eighteen?

Xavier: Yep. Eighteen is half of thirty-six, and when you add every number from one to thirty-six—you do, like, one plus two plus three, plus four, plus five, until 36—it makes 666. Do it if you have a calculator. Just add one plus two, plus three, until 36, and you have it.

Nardwuar: What's the difference, Justice, between a raclette party and a Playboy party?

Gaspard: Raclette is way more fun.

Nardwuar: Why's that? Because you guys played a Playboy party, didn't you? So you like cheese more than Playboy bunnies?

Xavier: Definitely, because we are French.

Gaspard: It tastes better and smells better.

Nardwuar: Justice, anything else you want to add to the people out there?

Xavier: You know that French TV show about, like, science and stuff, that's called *E=M?* And there's a guy called Mac Lesggy? You could be on it because you look like him. It's funny, he's a star—a superstar in France—and you just look like him. You could be his brother.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that, Justice. Why should people care about Justice? Why should people care, you think?

Xavier: They shouldn't. They should find something better to listen to.

Nardwuar: Thanks so much, Justice. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Xavier: Doot doot.

To hear this interview visit
www.nardwuar.com





A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOC SEAN CARSWELL

"I was so drunk I was dancing. And not just dancing, but dancing like I meant it."

PINK PARKAS AND BLACK EYES

Author's note: I have a new novel out called Train Wreck Girl. It's about trying to figure out what to do with your life when you start getting too old to die young. Here's the first chapter. If you like it, you can get the book at www.manicdpress.com, or at most bookstores. You can also hear me read this chapter at www.razorcake.org. Todd Taylor and I did a podcast featuring the music I listened to while writing the novel. You can hear that on the Razorcake web site, also.

With three minutes left in the millennium, the DJ at Tommy's Bar played the same song that DJs everywhere throughout the Mountain Time Zone played: Prince's "1999." I was so drunk I was dancing. And not just dancing, but dancing like I meant it. Spinning like I thought I was Michael Jackson, pointing a finger in the air like I had Saturday Night Fever. Hell, if the crowd hadn't been so thick, I would've been humping that mud and beer soaked floor like Prince in *Purple Rain*.

My girlfriend Libra tried to dance with me, but mostly she just laughed.

I was not trying to make her laugh.

Libra was a kid. She didn't know. She didn't know what it was like to have been a horny, small town adolescent trying to figure any angle that would work with the girls. She didn't know what the eighties were like to grow up in: all tight pants for boys and big hair for girls. She didn't know what it was like for a thirteen-year-old Danny McGregor in front of his brother's TV, trying to learn to dance from late night videos even though he hated the songs because that's what the girls wanted—to dance to these songs—and all Danny ever wanted was to do his best to be what the girls wanted. Though I guess Libra did know that last part about Danny. The part about him trying to be what the girls wanted. That was the thing that was perfectly clear about Danny.

The other thing about Danny is that he's me.

The other thing about Libra was that she was just starting elementary school when this Prince song came out.

So that was the big difference between Libra and me: she was at the beginning of her twenties when we danced and waited for the New Year. I was at the end of my twenties. Just a few months from thirty. And, with less than a minute left in the millennium, I flashed

back to those days of being that awkward adolescent, hanging out with my buddy Bart at a school dance, taking tiny sips off of stolen whiskey because we thought it was cool and listening to this very same song and me saying to Bart, "Man, that's gonna be one hell of a party when it turns 2000."

"Not for us," Bart said. "We'll be old by then. We'll probably have families and kids."

I said, "Not me. I'll be dead before I'm thirty." I took another sip of stolen whiskey and headed off to dance with Rosalie White, because I had a joint in my pocket and she liked to share her asthma medicine, which had some kind of speed in it, and together we'd be in for a fun night.

I snapped out of the flashback just as the countdown began.

Ten.

It occurred to me that I wasn't gonna be dead by thirty.

Nine.

Or at least the booze and drugs wouldn't kill me before then.

Eight.

And if the booze and drugs weren't gonna kill me, what was I gonna do with the rest of my life?

Seven.

It was a second of vertigo. Like what the fuck?

Six.

I needed something to hold on to, so I reached out for Libra and put my arms around her and spun her and kissed her like it was the end of a black-and-white flick.

Five.

Libra laughed a few feet away from me and I opened my eyes and realized that Libra wasn't in my arms at all. That some other girl was.

Four.

I let go of the girl. She slapped me in the face. Her fingernail jabbed my left eye. My vision was too blurry to see what she did next, but whatever it was, it caused her to slip and fall to the mud and beer soaked floor.

Three.

The girl's boyfriend helped her up, then turned to face me. He was a little guy.

Two.

Even though I knew better than to do this, I pushed the girl's boyfriend. Even though I know, never ever push someone in a

bar fight. Either start swinging or don't touch the guy at all.

One.

The girl's boyfriend knew this rule. He started swinging. And he knew how to fight. He cracked me once hard in the cheek and kept swinging. I didn't put up my hands to block or fight back at all. He landed five or six punches square to my head by the time everyone else finished screaming, "Happy New Year!" and kissed each other and the bouncers dragged me out and left me sprawled on the icy sidewalk in front of Tommy's Bar.

I walked away from Tommy's and into the Flagstaff night with snow and ice crunching under my Docs and just thinking again and again, damn, I'm a fuck up. A block into the walk, I heard Libra call out, "Danny, wait."

She jogged up to me: pink parka-ed and fuzzy hooded and little clouds of warm breath floating out of her. I wasn't really surprised that she was coming after me. I'd seen girlfriends do this before. All these crazy broads who'll forgive me for the most ridiculous shit. I never understood.

Libra caught up to me. She took my stocking cap out of her parka pocket and put it on my head. She ran her mitten over my left eye, which was already starting to swell. "Are you okay?" she asked. "I think that guy gave you a black eye."

"The girl did," I said. I started walking again, through downtown. Libra and I lived on the other end of it, down the railroad tracks a little. Libra walked with me. We didn't talk. I didn't apologize and she didn't ask me to. All around us, college kids floated in and out of bars, carrying bottles of champagne and blowing noise makers and throwing snowballs and making out against the bricks of century-old buildings.

We walked out of downtown and took the shortcut along the railroad tracks, toward our trailer. A couple of times, trains raced by, and Libra and I walked off the tracks and into the pine forest and waited for the trains to pass, then cut back onto the tracks. Libra carried a snowball with her. She tried to convince me to put it on my eye. I didn't say yes or no. I just kept walking. About halfway down the tracks, I sat down.



BRAD BEshaw

I DIDN'T PUT UP MY HANDS TO BLOCK OR FIGHT BACK AT ALL.
THE LANDED FIVE OR SIX PUNCHES
SQUARE TO MY HEAD BY THE TIME EVERYONE ELSE
FINISHED SCREAMING,

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

"That's it," I told Libra. "Tonight's the night I'm not gonna make it. Tonight's the night I'm gonna break down and admit that all of these motherfuckers are better than me. Every one of them."

"Get off of the tracks, Danny," Libra said.

I shook my head. She knelt down in front of me. She pressed her snowball against my eye. It stung enough to feel good. She leaned her face in close, as if she were going to kiss me. The fuzzy hood of her parka brushed against my cheek, right where that first punch

landed. I decided right then that it was over between Libra and me.

Within three weeks, I'd breakup with her and buy my ticket back to shit city.

—Sean Carswell



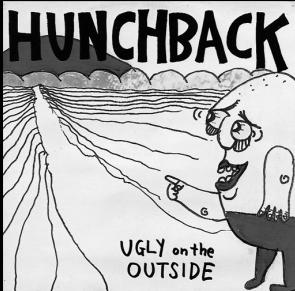
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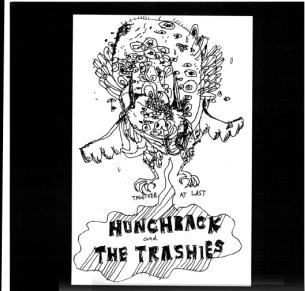
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6-SONG 7" EP

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HUNCHBACK
"UGLY ON THE OUTSIDE"
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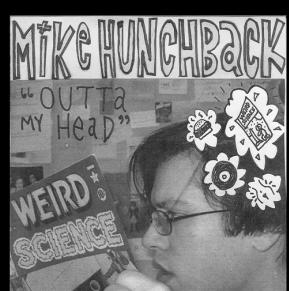
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"TOGETHER AT LAST"
4-SONG 7" EP

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NEVERENDING PARTY!
"DOG EAT RATFIGHT"
7" SINGLE

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MIKE HUNCHBACK
"OUTTA MY HEAD"
10-SONG SOLO CD-R

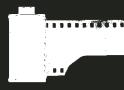
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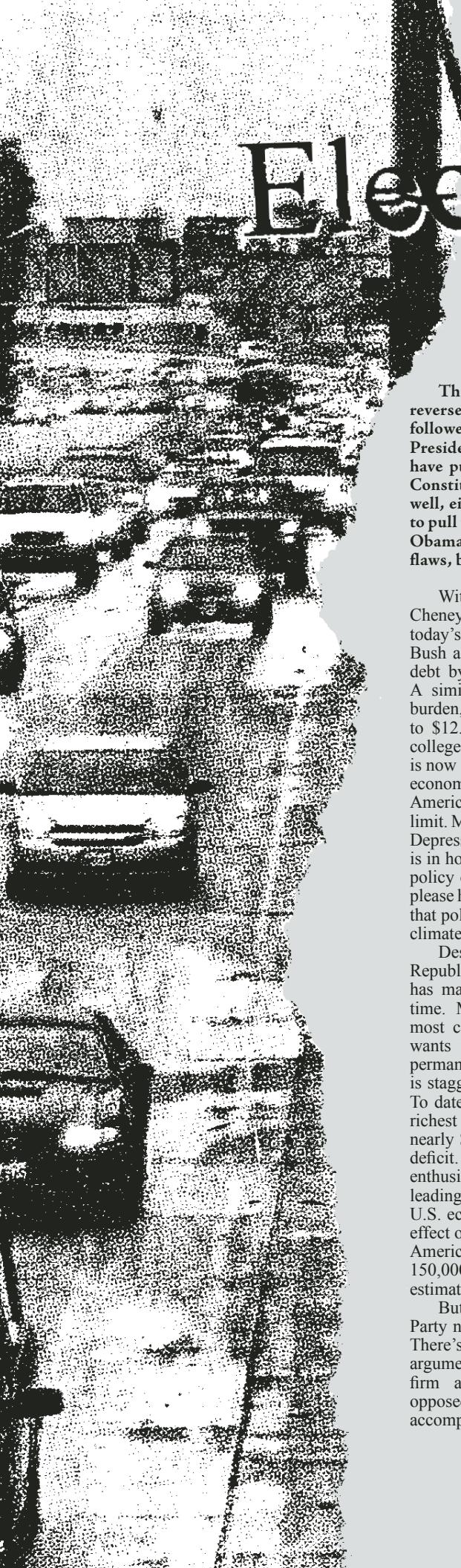
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Dan Monick's Photo Page
Palmdale, CA May 2008



Election 2008

By: Chris Pepus

This election offers another chance to reverse the disastrous course America has followed since the Reagan administration. President Bush and the Republican Party have pushed working people to the wall. The Constitution and the planet aren't doing so well, either. This may be our last opportunity to pull the country back from the brink. Barack Obama and the Democrats have a number of flaws, but they're our best bet this year.

With real wages shrinking since Bush and Cheney took office, the only thing rising in today's economy is the ocean of red ink. The Bush administration has increased the national debt by a record \$3.5 trillion (and counting). A similar pattern holds for consumers' debt burden, which rose from \$7.65 trillion in 2001 to \$12.8 trillion today. Average debt for new college graduates stood at \$12,000 in '01 and is now \$21,000. The main reason for the current economic downturn is that both Uncle Sam and American families have reached their credit limit. More than at any other time since the Great Depression, we are a nation where the majority is in hock to a privileged few. Likewise, Bush's policy of letting corporations do whatever they please has devastated the planet. Scientists report that pollution is bringing us close to irreversible climate change, if we're not there already.

Despite his reputation as a "maverick," Republican presidential nominee John McCain has marched in lockstep with Bush for some time. McCain's voting record is one of the most conservative in the U.S. Senate and he wants to make Bush's tax cuts for the rich permanent. Such indulgence toward the wealthy is staggeringly irresponsible at a time like this. To date, the value of Bush's tax breaks for the richest 1% of Americans is \$546 billion—nearly \$200 billion more than our latest annual deficit. And then there's McCain's boundless enthusiasm for Bush's war in Iraq. According to leading economists, the cost of the war for the U.S. economy is about \$3 trillion, including its effect on gas prices. The death toll is over 4,000 American military personnel and anywhere from 150,000 to 600,000 Iraqis, depending on which estimate you use.

But wouldn't Ralph Nader or the Green Party nominee be preferable to the Democrats? There's something to be said for that line of argument. Nader and the Greens have stood firm against the Bush-Cheney agenda, as opposed to the Democrats' waffling. The Dems accomplished very little after regaining control

of Congress in the 2006 elections. Likewise, Obama accepted a lot of campaign money from big corporations and his proposals are vague at times. When he does offer specifics, his plans sometimes don't go far enough, as in the case of the debt and foreclosure crisis. Another reason for skepticism is the fact that Obama's team of economic advisers includes several supporters of discredited conservative theories.

There are reasons to worry about Obama, and in the coming months, he may go back on his promises and show himself to be unworthy of support. You've always got to watch the Democrats closely. But, as of this writing (early June), the evidence clearly points to Obama as the best option. He obviously has the most realistic chance of defeating McCain and his stands on the issues are better than those of his party's other recent nominees. For starters, he's not in league with the Democratic Leadership Council, a corporate-funded lobby that was behind destructive Clinton-era policies such as NAFTA, the Welfare "Reform" Act, financial market deregulation, and most-favored nation trade status for China. Obama had the most progressive voting record in the Senate last year and he promises to renegotiate trade agreements to provide protections for workers and the environment. On fiscal issues, he wants to eliminate Bush's exorbitant tax cuts for the top income brackets.

The Illinois senator also pledged to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq in stages over his first sixteen months in office. But perhaps the most compelling reason to vote Democratic is that Republicans are on the verge of rigging the courts and the electoral system in their favor for decades to come. The Supreme Court is just one vote away from overturning its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that made abortion legal. Obama wants to uphold *Roe*; McCain is committed to selecting Supreme Court nominees who will vote to ban abortion. By the time the next president takes office, Republicans will have occupied the White House for twenty of the previous twenty-eight years, packing federal courts with far-right appointees. With a Democratic president to make new appointments and a Democratic Senate to confirm them, we can start to redress that imbalance.

As journalists such as Greg Palast and Bob Fitrakis reported, both of Bush's electoral victories were due to deliberate suppression of working-class and minority votes. Republican tactics included careful placement of defective voting machines and removing voters from

electoral rolls by falsely claiming that they were felons or had changed addresses. Currently, Republicans are pushing for strict new voter identification laws, despite the fact that vote fraud is practically nonexistent. Their real motive can be found in the GOP's history of selective enforcement of ID requirements, which played a role in Bush's 2004 win in New Mexico. Democratic members of Congress such as Representative John Conyers are investigating GOP vote suppression, and it would be nice to see the end of executive-branch stonewalling on the issue in 2009.

In addition to watching for Republicans' dirty electoral tricks, here are some other matters to keep

today, but that's mainly because of the nature of the civil war there (which Republicans still won't admit is a civil war). Paramilitaries from the two main religious groups, Sunnis and Shiites, have been battling each other with conventional warfare, terrorism, and ethnic cleansing. In Iraqi towns, it's often the case that the violence stopped simply because the majority group—whether Shiite or Sunni—had already killed or driven out all members of the minority. In Bush's Iraq, "peace" is just another way of saying, "No one left to kill."

The 2004 election offers the best example of

First, don't trust corporate media.

in mind as you watch the election unfold. First, don't trust corporate media. Over the past seven-plus years, they missed the story on just about every one of Bush's scams and they've also had a long love affair with John McCain. You'll be hearing a lot about how McCain is a foreign policy expert. Don't believe it. The list of experts does not include anyone who thought the Iraq War was a good idea. Apart from the fact that the invasion of Iraq was completely unjustified, any expert should have seen the impossibility of successfully occupying a country with such deep ethnic and religious divisions. On top of that, McCain is one of a small minority who still believe that invading Iraq was the right thing to do. Since he also thinks we should stay in Iraq for one hundred years, he's actually the worst of the foreign policy non-experts.

Media bias in this election can be seen most clearly in a tale of two ministers. During the spring, the press used Obama's minister at the time, Jeremiah Wright, as a means of attacking the Illinois senator's patriotism. Wright made some paranoid statements, suggesting, for instance, that the U.S. government deliberately introduced AIDS into the African American population. However, the root problems that motivate his rage, such as racism and police brutality, are real.

That's more than I can say for the demented religious bigots backing John McCain. McCain sought and received the endorsement of John Hagee, an evangelical Protestant minister who wants the U.S. to start a war with Iran in an attempt to fulfill Biblical prophecies and bring about the end of the world. That's right: Hagee is actually rooting for an apocalyptic war in the Middle East. "I am very proud of the Pastor John Hagee's spiritual leadership," McCain said.

It was a happy friendship until progressive bloggers released audio of Hagee saying that Adolf Hitler served the will of God. "God sent a hunter," he said, "Hitler was a hunter." The minister continued: "God allowed [the Holocaust] to happen . . . because God said, 'My top priority for the Jewish people is to get them to come back to the land of Israel.'" Hagee's cheerleading for the Nazis finally got the mainstream media to take an interest in his relationship with McCain. Only then did the candidate disavow the minister. Contrast that case to the media's 24/7 coverage of Rev. Wright earlier this year.

In addition to media spin, watch out for short-term improvements and fake turning points. The Republicans are great at manufacturing those, especially during the weeks before an election. For instance, Bush, McCain, & Co. claim that violence has declined in parts of Iraq. Some regions of that country do have less bloodshed

Republican manipulation of the Iraq War for political gain. Just a few days after Bush and Cheney celebrated re-election, a victory due in part to the perception that there had been progress in Iraq, the administration launched a major offensive in Fallujah. Some of the bloodiest fighting of the war followed. By the time that battle revealed how dire the situation in Iraq was, Americans had already voted.

This fall, when Bush and McCain tell you for the thousandth time that things are getting better in Iraq, ask yourself what information they're hiding this time.

It is vital that we defeat John McCain and increase the Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. Achieving those goals will strengthen the hand of members of Congress like Dennis Kucinich, who have been fighting for the people. Beyond that, we need to raise awareness about America's desperate situation and build an active coalition that will keep pressure on the politicians after the election. A Democratic win in November won't fix all the country's problems, but it will be a crucial step in the right direction.

Here are web addresses of media sources that provide an alternative to corporate news:

www.democracynow.org
www.gregpalast.com
www.mediachannel.org
www.guardian.co.uk
www.alternet.org

Here are URLs for some worthwhile activist groups:

www.punkvoter.com
www.workingamerica.org
www.stopthesqueeze.org

Here is a site with information about fighting vote suppression:

aclu.tv/vote



Let's Wreck the Party:



Rethinking Political Affiliation in Presidential Elections

By: Jeff Fox

In the bestselling book *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, author Thomas Frank questions why blue collar voters in Kansas have been so supportive of Republican candidates in recent years. Frank argues that current conservative economic policy mainly benefits the ultra-wealthy at the expense of the working class. Therefore, Kansas voters are irrationally voting against their self-interest.

Yet, as the 2008 presidential election season presses on, the news is filled with sound bites of rabid supporters squealing with glee at the campaign rallies. Otherwise sensible people argue incessantly at work about banal

better yet, let's think of partisan dedication as irrational brand loyalty. Politicians and voters are producers and consumers—of public policy.

Americans claim to love freedom of choice. Businesses and consumers agree that diversity in the marketplace fosters healthy competition. We believe that competition drives innovation and increases quality as rivals work to build a better mousetrap.

Yet we make an exception to this rule for our political system. When it comes to our own governance, even three choices are just too many. We consumers of public policy accept less choice and diversity in the voting booth than we get at a drive-through window.

monopoly, a duopoly or two-party state is not really the smorgasbord of free choice and open competition that it's cracked up to be.

When a market is dominated by two suppliers, there is usually only very limited competition between the suppliers. Each supplier is well-aware of what the other is doing and how they will respond to any move. Rather than fostering outright competition, this often leads to collusion by the two parties, where they jointly dominate the market. The two major suppliers often work together to create what are called "barriers to entry." These barriers are intentionally set up to make it hard for new suppliers to get into the marketplace.

We consumers of public policy accept less choice and diversity in the voting booth than we get at a drive-through window.

TV debates. Fastidious homeowners deface their own property with free ads for politicians. Working stiffs voluntarily give their hard-earned income to the election campaign of a millionaire. Tax dollars subsidize the dog and pony shows known as conventions.

Never mind Kansas—what's the matter with *everyone*? Voters all across our nation have a completely irrational dedication to two political parties that ultimately do very little for them. Yet voters go back to the polls every four years and vote for one of the two major parties.

Why is this? Because politicians have snowed us voters into believing that we are members of their team. We willingly take sides in their gridlock of partisan squabbling. But we voters are members of these political parties about as much as we are in the starting lineup of our favorite baseball team. Unless you are a politician or are employed by the party, you are just a fan. You may benefit a little bit in the end, but they are not making plays for the purpose of benefiting you.

We voters *are* part of a team, it's just a different team than the politicians would have you think. Rather than Democrats and Republicans, American politics is more aptly described as politicians and voters. Or

Two sizes fit all.

Of course, there *are* more than two candidates in each presidential election. But the two major parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, essentially have a stranglehold on the marketplace, which does not benefit the consumer.

In a business model, a monopoly occurs when one supplier dominates a marketplace and does not allow competition. There is little incentive for a monopoly supplier to improve the quality of what it provides or to offer a good value to consumers. This is because, simply put, a monopoly is the only game in town. A monopoly is generally understood as not being good for consumers.

In a political model, a monopoly would be what we know as a single-party state. We mock the elections in single-party states as being shams, as there is only one candidate for voters to choose from. Examples of single-party states include Cuba, North Korea, China, the former Soviet Union and pre-invasion Iraq. American citizens and politicians disparage such states, calling them oppressive and lacking in freedom.

Because of the dominance of the two parties in the U.S., our political system is the equivalent of a duopoly. In comparison to a

And this is exactly what is happening with America's two major political parties. We have two suppliers that are essentially acting in concert to maintain their exclusive control over the marketplace. For all the rancor and partisan bickering we see between the two parties, they are both feeding from the same trough and cranking the same product out the other end. The two parties differ on a few hot-button or wedge issues, but neither varies very much from the path of the other.

A perfect example of this kind of collusion is the presidential debates. From 1976 to 1984, the presidential debates were sponsored by the League of Women Voters—a grass-roots, non-partisan organization dedicated to voter education. The LWV paid for and produced the debates, and invited the candidates to participate.

Just prior to the 1988 presidential debates, representatives of *both parties* secretly agreed upon a "Memorandum of Understanding" about the debates. This agreement stated that the opposing candidates would, in cooperation, dictate the topics, format, moderator, panelists, audience, and even the camera shots. Among other things, it was also agreed that there would also be no direct candidate-to-candidate questioning. (Agreements for

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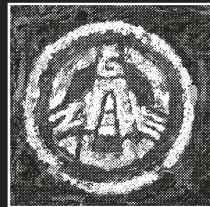


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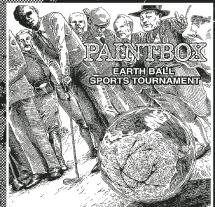
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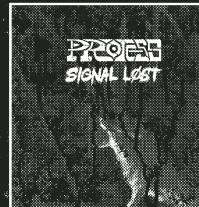
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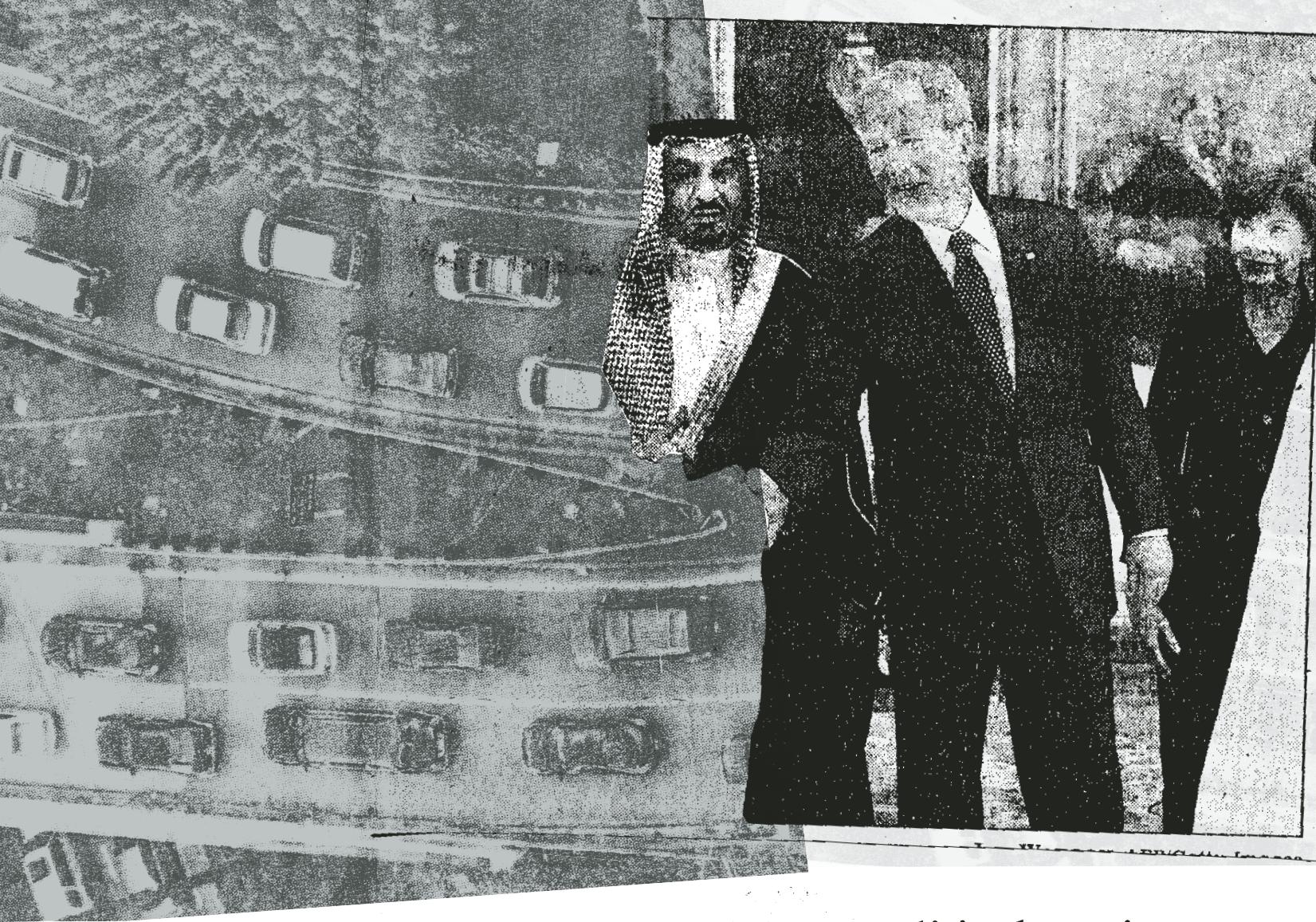
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But we voters are members of these political parties about as much as we are in the starting lineup of our favorite baseball team.

following debates would severely restrict time for answers and entirely ban follow-up questions from the moderator.)¹

But most importantly, the MoU stated that "Sponsorship will be conditioned upon agreement to all provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding." In other words, both candidates agreed only to participate in debates where the sponsors let them call all the shots.

When the League of Women Voters learned about the MoU, they swore off any involvement with the debates. They issued a statement saying, "The demands of the two campaign organizations would perpetrate a fraud on the American voter. It has become clear to us that the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity and answers to tough questions. The League has no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public."

Luckily, an organization known as the Committee on Presidential Debates was ready to step in and produce the events. And they had no problem with the MoU that had caused so much alarm among the League of Women Voters. Why was the CPD so agreeable? Because the CPD had been created the previous year by former chairs of the Republican *and* Democratic parties. The organization was basically set up and run by the same people who had drafted the MoU in the first place. The two major parties handed the debates to themselves.

So, since 1988, through mutual agreement, the Democrats and Republicans have been staging their own nationally televised, softball presidential quiz shows and calling them debates. And the whole thing is paid for with corporate donations.²

In the time that the CPD has been producing the debates, the only third-party candidate who was allowed to participate

was Ross Perot in 1992. The CPD has said that third-party candidates would only be invited to debate if they had enough ballot access to potentially win and a 15% level of support across five national polls. The 2004, CPD-produced two-party debate was broadcast on network television and watched by 62.5 million people. The third-party and independent debates were only carried by C-SPAN.

Supporters of the CPD claim that they just need to set a threshold level to keep the debates from becoming too crowded. But the Federal Election Committee provides federally distributed public election funding for parties that receive only 5% of the popular vote. Why the higher level just to get *into the debate*?

If there truly is a free political marketplace, then why do Democrats and Republicans act as though they are entitled to all of our votes, one way or the other? To

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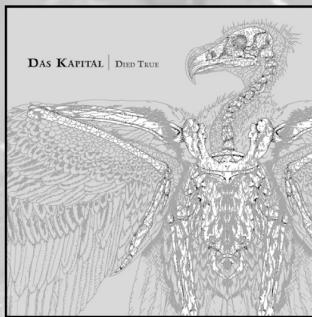
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Just remember, you're voting. You're not placing a bet at the dog track. You don't "lose" if you fail to pick the winner of the race. If you really do believe in a party's platform on issues that are important to you,

then your vote is never wasted.

this day, Democrats complain that Ralph Nader blew the 2000 election for them just by *being on the ballot* in Florida—as though the Democrats have the right to all non-Republican votes. And the Democrats lost Florida by 537 votes. Every third-party candidate in Florida received more than 537 votes, yet Nader is singled out for blame. Why is this? Probably because he has been so highly critical of the two-party system and the most successful third-party candidate in recent times.

Republicans do it, too. In the 2004 election, presidential candidate Tom Harens was on the Minnesota ballot, under the Christian Freedom Party. Harens said that both major parties were corrupt and failed to follow the philosophy and teachings of Christianity. He wanted his new party to give true Christians an alternative. Republicans criticized Harens, claiming that he was taking votes away from Bush in a key battleground state.

Admittedly, third party candidates are long-shots in presidential elections. And partisans use that idea to try and keep voters from going "off-brand." Voting for a third party is often derided as "throwing your vote away." As the argument goes, your vote is not helping someone win the election, so you have wasted your say in the matter.

But using that same specious logic, it can be argued that millions of major party supporters are throwing their vote away as well. This is because of the strange nature of the electoral college system.

Your presidential vote does not go into a nationwide tally that is counted to determine a winner. Rather, your vote only goes into a statewide tally. The candidate that gets the most votes in your state wins your *entire state outright*—winner takes all—regardless of whether they won by one vote or one million votes.³

So, if you vote for a major party candidate in a state where there is not going to be a close election, it can be said that you have wasted your vote, even if your guy wins. After all, once a candidate has won your state's popular vote, they have *all* of your state's electoral votes locked up. One more vote from you does nothing for them in the overall race. You're putting gas in their tank after they have already crossed the finish line.

And how about all those people who back the major party that *loses* the election? Their votes have not helped someone win. So, by the same dicey reasoning, they have thrown their votes away as well.

Just remember, you're voting. You're not placing a bet at the dog track. You don't "lose" if you fail to pick the winner of the race. And if you really do believe in a party's platform on issues that are important to you, then your vote is never wasted.

But consider the value of voting off-brand. If you don't love the major parties or don't live in a battleground state, your vote might be better spent adding to the popular vote count for a third party. As mentioned earlier, once a party receives 5% of the popular vote, they can apply for federal

election funds to help future campaigns. Ironically, many people stick with the major parties because they feel there is no viable alternative. Yet their votes are the very thing that could make the alternatives more viable. The concentration of power in the two-party system creates a lockdown on ideas, questions, and, more importantly, solutions. Voting non-partisan can help break that stalemate.

Endnotes

1. The Memorandum of Understanding for the 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2004 presidential debates can be found at <http://opendebates.org/news/documents.html>.

2. Since 1988, the debates have been produced by the CPD, which gets its funding solely from corporate sponsors. The debates have been paid for by the AARP, Anheuser-Busch, Continental Airlines, AT&T, Ford Motor Company, Lucent Technologies, Phillip-Morris and many other corporations, many of which are multinationals. Source: the Committee for Public Debates' own website: <http://www.debates.org/pages/natspons.html>

3. Maine and Nebraska do not use the "winner takes all" method of distributing their electoral votes. They use the Congressional District Method. This method gives these states the *ability* to split their electoral votes between more than one candidate. However, the electoral vote has never actually been split by either state.



BAND REUNITED

Joe: This is sort of a common question, but I always liked your story behind this. What got you into punk rock?

Kash: Hip hop was all that I listened to until I was about fourteen. I didn't drink because I was Muslim. So I didn't drink or smoke or fuck or drink or anything. A friend of mine was asking if I was straight edge and I said, "No." I didn't know what that was. He told me he wanted me to listen to a punk band and I told him, "I'm not into devil music," which is what I used to call anything played by white people. He played me Minor Threat. I really liked them. It changed everything. I went home and said, "Maybe I'm fucking stupid for not listening to other stuff." And, of course, when you're fourteen, you're stubborn and stupid and I checked it out. It led to other things and what it really led to was me listening to the Bad Brains for the first time. My

friend played it for me and I just sat there with a huge smile on my face and then my friend turned the record around and I see that they are like four black guys. I said [yells], "What?! No! No! I can do this too!?" It is stupid but you're fourteen and that makes all the sense in the world. [laughs] I feel like I'm on VH1.

Joe: I'm Joe Dana from *Bands Reunited* and we came to talk to you and Nuno Bettencourt about getting Extreme back together to do "More Than Words."

Kash: No Shit? Where is the camera?

Joe: The camera is in the bagel. Did you really move to Los Angeles to specifically start a band?

Kash: Absolutely.

Joe: Was it that you couldn't start a band in New York?

Kash: I played in a few bands in New York and I was playing bass.

I wasn't really singing or anything. I talked to a few bands that played out here (in Los Angeles) and one of the members asked if I wanted to come out and start a band with him. That night he saw me sing a couple songs. He really liked it. My best friend was moving here. I was in college. He told me he was moving here after graduating. I thought, "Well, Black Flag is from L.A." I wanted to experience the world so I dropped out of college, moved here, and started a punk band [laughs].

Joe: Wow.

Kash: Pretty smart, huh?

Joe: Kinda.

Kash: I thought about working in the toy industry for the rest of my life and I didn't want to do it. It was an impulse decision but it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

Joe: The bio on your site explains that you met Ben through a flyer. How did you meet Jesse (bassist)?

There is a part in Henry Rollins's *Get in the Van* where he talks about an early gig with Black Flag. Apparently, one night only a handful of people showed up and Henry gave a lackluster performance. After the gig, the band thoroughly admonished Henry and told him that it didn't matter how many people were in the club, he was still obligated to give a top notch performance. After all, those people came out to see Black Flag.

That passage always stuck out for me. I was reminded of it the first time I caught Bad Reaction. I just happened to wander to the upstairs stage at Zen Sushi in Silverlake, where I found only a single audience member rocking out to this fantastic hardcore band. Ben Edge had his guitar up way high on his chest and he looked like he was murdering the strings. The guitar in that position would look silly on anyone else, but Ben made it look cool. The rhythm section—Jesse on bass and former band member Justin on drums—had me bouncing on the balls of my feet. Finally, Kash, the lead singer, was running all over the stage, jumping off, and getting inches away from my face. He had the audience of two jumping and singing along... and I didn't even know the words. Bad Reaction did not care that there were only two people in the audience. They were going to play as if they were playing for the whole damn city.

A few months later, I saw them play at a tiny storefront on Sunset in Echo Park. The streets were overrun with people. Kids were loitering, drinking, and causing a general disturbance. Cops were parked across the street and didn't do a thing. It was as if Bad Reaction had created their own street fair. As soon as they started, all the kids crammed into this store and pushed it way over capacity. It made me feel like I was fifteen again and at the now defunct Natural Fudge and seeing my favorite local bands rip stuff up way past curfew. The general feeling was "we're all going to be arrested but this is going to be something we tell our grandkids about."

Interview by Joe Dana | Photos by Don Seki and Chad Sengstock | Illustration and layout by Keith Rosson
BAD REACTION: Kash—Vocals | Nik Rips—Drums | Ben Edge—Guitar | Jesse A—Bass



Kash: When I first came here, I was working at a store on Melrose (Avenue) called Retail Slut. They sold punk shit. At the time, I was drinking and I would drink at work. It was kept under control, but it was a lot of fun. I used to hook up these kids with free shit. They invited me to come to a party in Long Beach. So I went. I got down to the party and I didn't really know anybody. There were a whole bunch of hardcore kids and a whole bunch of kids from the Long Beach area. Everyone was being really nice to me and really cool. This dude stumbles up to me. He says, "Hey man, you're cool, right?" and I say, "Yeah" [laughing]. He is all slurring and he says, "You don't mind if we put on some Skrewdriver (white power punk band), do you?" and I said, "Huh?" He said, "It's just Skrewdriver, dude. It doesn't mean anything. It's cool right?" I said, "Yeah, I guess." Turns out that was Jesse. [laughs] A couple years later, I'm starting the band and our friend, Wino, was playing

guitar. Wino was really cool with Jesse. He brought Jesse over and he starts playing bass. Jesse was amazing and I just dropped it at that point. Jesse really liked my voice and I really liked his bass playing. It just clicked.

Joe: So Wino was the original guitarist?

Kash: We had about ten people in this band besides the people who are in it now. Charles from EFU is one of our first drummers. Our friend, Tim, tried to play drums for a while. We had a lot of people try out for this band. I put up ads everywhere. People would call up and say, "Yeah, I want to be in a punk band," and we'd say, "Cool," and then they'd say, "But I've never played the drums before." Fucking asshole. Why are you here?

Joe: Do you remember what the flyer said when you found Ben (guitarist)?

Kash: "Looking for guitarist" and I listed mainly Southern California

hardcore bands because that is why I moved here in the first place. It was Black Flag, the Adolescents, and the usual suspects like Bad Brains, Reagan Youth...

Joe: Did you stick in something to scare some people away like Starland Vocal Band?

Kash: Simon and Garfunkel. [in a high voice] "Get your titties ready, ladies!"

Joe: What were some of the original names of Bad Reaction?

Kash: Right before we had a name, it was me, Ben, Justin, and Jesse. We had eight songs and no name. It was the first band where we had so many songs and no name. Normally, we start a band and say [in gruff voice], "We're going to be called Mob Blob" or the Cocksuckers or some stupid shit. We all wrote a bunch of names and put them in a hat and pulled out, "Bad Reaction."



ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY DON SEKI

Joe: Really?

Kash: It was ridiculous. Originally, we were going to call ourselves The Problem but we got an email from these kids in New Jersey. One of their dads was a lawyer and they were a punk band called The Problem. We thought, "That is pretty punk of you guys, getting your lawyer fucking daddy."

Joe: They could be the N.J. Problem and you guys could be L.A. Problem

Kash: [speaks with accent] La Problema! With cilantro! [laughs] We had a lot of funny names though. We had the California Reich and Fatal Flaw.

Joe: Do you guys still talk to your original drummer, Justin?

Kash: He won't stop calling me.

Joe: Where did you find Nik (current drummer)?

Kash: We did two shows with Dr. Know in Sacramento and Richmond. At the time, Justin was in the band and really unsatisfied with being in a punk band. He didn't like punk at all. He hated the people. We'd have people slamming at shows and he would misinterpret it and just hate them for it. It was really horrible, actually. He was a dick! [laughs] No, I'm kidding,

you. [Laughing, then deadpan] I would totally touch you.

Joe: Three fourths of your band does not indulge in alcohol or tobacco. Are you a straight edge band?

Kash: No. I don't claim straight edge. I never will. It just so happens that I don't drink or smoke but I don't claim that. I don't have a problem with people who claim it. Ben is straight edge and Nik is too. It is cool because Jesse drinks more than enough for all of the band members.

Joe: And you guys keep him safe.

Kash: He is hilarious.

Joe: Does Jesse get drunk on stage?

Kash: [silence]

Joe: Because the times I have seen you, he was.

Kash: If he does, it is awesome just to see Ben's reaction. It is fun. It is like if you put a couple of brothers in a room. They'll yell and scream and stuff but it is all in good fun. Last time we were practicing, Jesse brought a forty. Every time Jesse brought it to his lips, Ben was just like [yells], "No! No! Jesse! No!" He's laughing the entire time. We're all laughing.

Joe: What are your day jobs?

Kash: Jesse is a stagehand for all kinds of events that go on in L.A. Ben works

"He told me he wanted me to listen music,' which is what I used to call

but it was really unpleasant to be around sometimes. Nik was playing with Dr. Know—and they weren't necessarily treating him shabbily—but he kind of had more fun hanging out with us. Outside of the show, Justin was complaining and Jesse asked Nik if he knew anyone who wants to play drums with us and he said, "Yeah, me!" We asked, "You're going to quit Dr. Know?" (And he said), "Yeah, if I can play with you guys, I will." We had him practice with us. Justin showed him a thing or two on the drums. Nik quit Dr. Know and he joined us a week later. We wouldn't be anything without Nik. Nik is really like the heart of everything we're doing.

Joe: Is it difficult touring with him since he is underage?

Kash: No, not at all. Sometimes you can't go into bars, but we don't really like bars anyway. I mean, I like bars because girls are at bars and I like girls.

Joe: And they are drunk and you can say, "I'll drive you home."

Kash: Yeah. I got this big old van. We can fuck in it and you can pass out in the back. I would never touch

at Trader Joe's. Nik is in community college. I work running a video room at a talent agency.

Joe: Do the day jobs allow you to tour?

Kash: I know it is hard for all of us to tour, especially Jesse, because work is so stagnant. We'll always find a way. The longest we've been gone for is two and a half weeks. We're going to the East Coast, Europe, and Japan soon.

Joe: Have the people at your job heard your band?

Kash: Yes and it is weird because a lot of people don't like punk but they like Bad Reaction.

Joe: Why did you stop playing twenty-one-and-over shows?

Kash: The reason why is because a girl came up to me at one of our all ages shows. She told me she liked us a lot and we were her favorite band but we were slapping her in the face because we keep on playing twenty-one and over shows. It had an effect on me when she said that. Not that I like slapping seventeen-year-old girls in the face and not that I *don't* like slapping seventeen-year-old girls in the face because I do [laughs], but not while I'm playing music.

Joe: You've gotten pretty close to breaking that policy once, didn't you?

Kash: When?

Joe: That Vegas show with the Bad Samaritans.

Kash: No. Once we found out it was twenty-one and over, we said no. This one time, we played a show with The Freeze because The Freeze rules. We had thirty kids come to the show who were under eighteen and the place turned them away. They let them in, took their money, and then gave them their money back because the owner showed up and they decided that they better make it an eighteen and up show. They told (all the kids) to go home. So I went outside and told all the kids to wait outside in the back of the club. I remember that Jesse brought a forty foot-long mike cord. I took the mike, snaked it down the hallway, and ran outside the backdoor. I was singing in the back with doors open in the alley. All these kids in the alley were circle pitting. It was kind of a "fuck you" to the club. It is stupid to have a punk show that is twenty-one and over.
[Conversation devolves into tangents about two-pack-a-day smoking older punks in mosh pits.]

was smiling the entire time, but I don't want to jump on children. At the same time, fuck them [laughs].

Joe: Has anyone ever been really freaked out about you jumping into their face like that?

Kash: Oh yeah. There were these girls in the crowd. I started singing into individuals' faces and one girl actually ran away and I chased her into the girl's bathroom. She ran into one of the stalls and I was screaming outside the stall. The best was that I ran into the bathroom and everyone followed me into the bathroom. We were trying to get her out. She never came out and I never saw her again.

Joe: She doesn't answer your calls?

Kash: Unfortunately not. [in gruff voice] "If she did, she'd get fucked!"

Joe: I know you've covered the Body Count's "Cop Killer," Minor Threat's "Guilty of Being White," the Bad Brains' "Pay to Cum," and you covered an entire Bad Brains set. Are there any other covers you've toyed with doing?

Kash: There are a million covers that we want to do. The only problem is that we're not a cover band. I'd like to do the Authorities' "I Hate Cops."

Joe: So why a song about Gatorade?



DON SEKI

to a punk band and I told him, 'I'm not into devil anything played by white people.'

Kash: Don't get me wrong, dude. If we're offered to play a twenty-one and over show with the Bad Brains or some reincarnation of Minor Threat, we'll do it, but that ain't gonna fucking happen.

Joe: Would you do it for the Soul Brains?

Kash: Who is on drums?

Joe: Bonzo.

Kash: [speaks in English accent] A monkey on the drums?

Joe: Neil Pert.

Kash: We're there [sarcastically].
[Conversation devolves into tangents about Rush.]

Joe: You are known for really finding people in the audience and not using the stage very much. Did that come naturally or did you have to lead up to it?

Kash: It came to me naturally. The first time we played, the first song we did was "Guilty of Being White" by Minor Threat. I think I sang two words and then attacked all the kids in the front. It got better because at first I was bulldozing people and knocking kids into the ground. There was one kid and I had my knee in his chest and I was singing in his face. Granted, he

Do you ever get punks yelling at you for supporting a corporation?

Kash: Here's the deal about Gatorade...

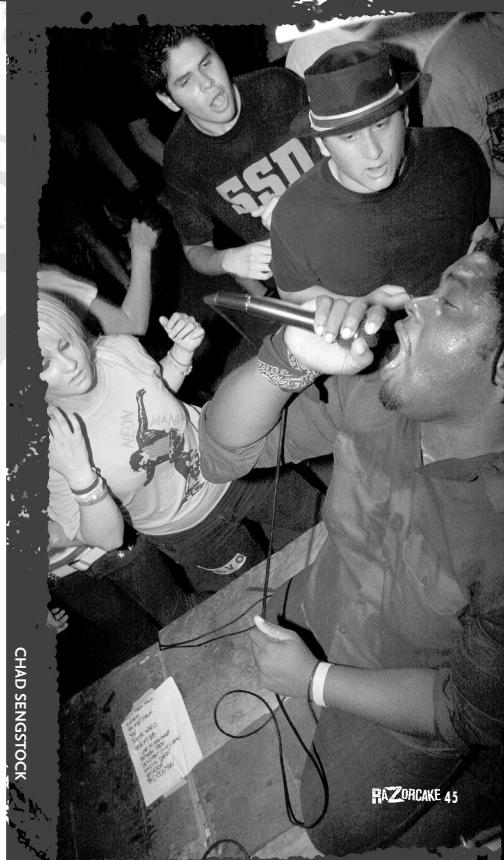
Joe: Sell out.

Kash: I know. Ben and I are sitting around my house and we're listening to The Faction. The Faction have a song called, "Let's Go Get Cokes" and it seemed like a funny thing at the time. We drink a lot of Gatorade. Let's write a song about drinking Gatorade. All the other songs are serious. Let's have some fun. We're not supporting the company. We're not supporting Gatorade in particular. It is pure as it can possibly be. We're talking about hanging out and drinking Gatorade. If people can't take a joke, they can take these nuts. Everyone we know has taken the fucking joke. In fact, I think the joke has been taken too fucking far. We go on tour and kids show up with Gatorade bottles. They throw Gatorade on us while we're playing. Now, I'm a Vitamin Water fan.

Joe: You have to write a new song now.

Kash: But nothing rhymes with water.

Joe: Every son and every daughter needs Vitamin Water.



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DON SEKI

"Granted, he was smiling the entire time, but I don't want to jump on children. At the same time, fuck them."

Kash: If you don't drink it, you ought'er. Just like Sgt. Slaughter.

Joe: Is there a difference in the sound of Bad Reaction from your first record, *Symptoms of Youth*, to the newer 7"s?

Kash: Before, it was harder to write more aggressive stuff because Justin didn't want to be in a punk band. So it was really hard at first to get these songs hammered out because he would go so far against the grain to make everything sound difficult and different. I listened to the album a couple days ago. I don't listen to it often and for what he did, I think it is awesome. He did things that I would never hear from punk bands. I know I'm sucking my own dick and it is delicious. The new stuff, I'll take it over sophisticated because it fucking shreds, dude. Nik is nineteen years old but I know a whole bunch of old dudes that he just blows out of the water. Jesse wrote some amazing stuff. Ben's solos are out of control. My voice is a lot better. It has more meaning. It has more balls. Whoever reads this, should buy it [laughs].

Joe: Did you do vocal exercises?

Kash: Actually, do you know how I got better? I sang to all my old records and I recorded myself. I sang along to Youth Of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, and Bad Brains. I'm doing it again. I've been singing along to the Zero Boys.

Joe: Is there a band that you will spare no expense for? For example, I know that you and Ben went to New York just to see the Gorilla Biscuits play again. Is there a band that you will break your bank account for?

Kash: Top Five. Minor Threat. (If) they charge five hundred dollars, I'll pay it. Of course, the Bad Brains. Black Flag if they do a first four years show and they have all four singers sing a couple songs, for sure.

Joe: I went to that first four years show at the Hollywood Palladium (Note: It was a god awful embarrassment of a "reunion show" put on by Greg Ginn from Black Flag a few years back).

Kash: That wasn't the first four years!

Joe: They billed it as such.

Kash: [sighs] They did. Did you see the Amoeba show? (Note: Henry Rollins had his band play Black Flag songs at

Amoeba records in Hollywood. He also had Keith Morris and Chuck Dukowski sing a few songs with them).

Joe: Yeah. That kicked ass.

Kash: It was awesome. I jumped on one of those record shelves and dived on some kids. Oh and the band, the Zero Boys. We definitely have a large Zero Boys influence... and if the Subhumans from Canada get together and tour, I'll see them.

Joe: Finally, as we agreed, Skippy or Jiff peanut butter?

Kash: Skippy!

Joe: Creamy or crunchy?

Kash: I'm a crunchy man.

Joe: Would you get extra crunchy?

Kash: I didn't know they made extra crunchy! Yes!



Infoshop?

By
Lauren Trout

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Layout by Dave Disorder

Infoshop?

A Very Quick Summary of Punk Rock's Anarchist Roots

Over the last several years, (more than likely a result of more people becoming disillusioned with the current political system) punk bands that write lyrics with overtly anarchist¹ messages have been gaining popularity. Bands in the punk and hardcore scenes, including This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Drop Dead, Propagandhi, Ghost Mice, and Behind Enemy Lines, speak about political issues in their liner notes or in between songs at shows.

Non-conformity and rejecting mainstream society have always been the universal themes in punk rock lyrics, so wanting social change and becoming politically aware and active are natural progressions for many punk rockers. The idea that anarchism and punk rock can go hand in hand isn't news to many people, considering that the roots of the punk rock ideology are in anarchist theory. Many of the ideas adopted by the punk rock subculture—that everyone needs to be aware of the prejudice around them and treat everybody equally (egalitarianism), that women can scream and play instruments just as good as the boys (feminism), and that cops are only looking out for the rich (anti-authoritarianism)—are also anarchist principles.

While some bands like the Sex Pistols took a nihilistic stance in regards to politics during punk rock's early

years, other punks found that a more worthwhile response to the repression of a centralized government was to voice their dissent and find ways to live outside the system. The punk rock "do it yourself" attitude was developed in part by 1980s anarcho-punk bands like Crass because they wanted, as co-founder of the group Penny Rimbaud once told an interviewer, "to counter the negative 'No Future' of punk; as we believed there was a future and we wanted to demonstrate this in a creative way."

Infoshops: Putting Radical Ideals into Practice

At the shows we go to, sometimes a few people are running a distro with a table of photocopied fact sheets, pamphlets, booklets, zines, and even books. Those forms of print media have long been used for self-expression or spreading awareness about a certain issue by punks, political activists, and other outsiders whose work would be ignored by mainstream media outlets. An infoshop is the idea of a distro taken a step further: to have those materials housed in a public space that is open to the public.

In addition to making independently printed and politically oriented literature available, an infoshop is the kind of "counter-institution" that puts radical ideals² into practice in the way that it is run. While an infoshop might have to sell books and merchandise or library cards to pay its rent, almost

(1) Anarchy in the literal sense; "the absence of authority." Not "getting trashed and fighting each other" the way some punks have misinterpreted it.

(2) Radical—here meaning radical leftist—is an umbrella term used to describe ideals or ideologies that fall on the far left of the political spectrum. For example, if an infoshop's website mentions that they carry radical literature, that means they will have titles about specific ideologies like anarchism, communism, socialism, etc. as well as titles about issues that are common to all of those groups (feminism, globalization, class struggle, race theory, anti-capitalism, etc.).

infoshop!



Fare Shares Co-op

all infoshops are run by volunteers and any profit that an infoshop makes is used to buy books or supplies and pay bills. An infoshop might also be used as a meeting space for activist groups or as a venue for local bands and artists, in addition to functioning as a library or bookstore. Every infoshop takes on a different form depending on the needs of the community that it serves and what resources are available.

The Collective Work Model

In his 1997 article about infoshops, *Maximum Rock and Roll* contributor Chuck Munson noted that infoshops are “rooted in the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) ethic—they are created by people who are interested in making the revolutionary process happen, not just sitting around and talking about it.” The day-to-day operations of an infoshop are managed by a collective; a non-hierarchical group of individuals who work together for a common purpose. Open infoshop collectives usually require that an interested person volunteer and attend meetings at the infoshop for a certain amount of time before the collective agrees to accept the person as a new member.³

In addition to staffing shifts, an infoshop collective member might be required to attend regular weekly or monthly meetings where decisions about procedures, policies, fundraising, volunteering, events, and other things that come up at an infoshop are made. At a collective meeting, each member is given the opportunity to add a proposal to

the agenda: the list of topics the collective will discuss at the meeting. The collective then chooses a facilitator to read the items on the agenda and make sure that everybody is being listened to and shown respect. Since each member holds equal say in each decision, collectives use consensus-based decision making to ensure that all members of the collective are comfortable with the decision being made.⁴

Infoshops in the U.S.

There are as many as sixty-seven infoshops open in the United States today and they exist in almost every big city in the United States: Bluestockings Radical Books in New York City, Brian MacKenzie Infoshop in Washington DC, Bound Together Books in San Francisco, Mayday Books in Minneapolis, and Left Bank Books in Seattle are just a few examples. Because radicals have historically flocked to urban areas, infoshops located in big cities tend to be well-established in the amount of years they have been open. For instance, Wooden Shoe Books in Philadelphia has been open for thirty years, and the Lucy Parsons Center in Boston was started sixteen years ago.

Though you might not think of these states as hotbeds of radical activity, there are enough small-town radicals in the United States to run infoshops

(3) Most infoshop collectives are open collectives; as opposed to closed collectives, which don't accept new members after the original collective is formed, or only consider adding a person to the collective if the person has been invited to join by another collective member.

(4) Consensus means that after everybody has given their input on the topic, the collective members reach a decision by compromising until they find a solution that everybody can agree on.

Infoshop? Q&A

like: the Catalyst Infoshop in Prescott, Arizona, Black Sheep Books in Montpelier, Vermont, Boxcar Books in Bloomington, Indiana, Madison Infoshop in Madison, Wisconsin, No Coast Infoshop in Columbia, Missouri, and Velocipede Infoshop in Iowa City, Iowa.

Below, you will find profiles of a handful of U.S. infoshops, along with Q and As with collective members from Sedition Books in Houston, Monkeywrench Books in Austin, and Wooden Shoe Books in Philadelphia. Please keep in mind that the members from these three collectives are speaking from their experiences as volunteers, and don't necessarily represent their collectives as a whole.

Getting Involved!

Though this article is focused on infoshops in the United States, infoshops and similar radical spaces are open around the globe: from Canada and Europe to Africa and Asia. The Slingshot! Collective in Berkeley, CA publishes a "Radical Contacts List" in their yearly organizers and on their website, so find the infoshop closest to where you live and go check it out if you haven't already. As you'll see in the Q and A sections of this article, volunteering

at an infoshop can be an amazing and rewarding experience. But even if you don't have much time to spare, there are many ways you can help out your local infoshop.

Here are some ideas: plan a benefit show and donate money from the door, see if they will accept used books or zines and donate some of your collection, or just support the infoshop by buying books or zines from them whenever possible.

If there is no infoshop in your area and you're considering starting one, look at the websites of different infoshops that are already established. Read the collective mission statements, look for information about how they got their infoshop started, and if you find a collective that you admire, email them and ask for advice on starting up a new infoshop. Be wary though; starting an infoshop will take as much time, money, and people, as opening up a for-profit bookstore.

A good starting point before (or instead of) trying to start an infoshop is to start a book collective with some other people in your town who are interested in radical literature; borrow each other's books, hold meetings to talk about radical ideas and literature, or host film screenings and other public events in your basement.

Profile: Sedition Books Infoshop in Houston, Texas

Sedition Books, Houston's first infoshop since the 1960s, has gone through a lot of changes since the collective was formed in 2006. Their first location, on Washington Avenue in downtown Houston, served as a lending library and music venue until it was burned to the ground by an unknown arsonist in early 2007. The collective moved forward and a few months later they found a home for the infoshop on Old Spanish Trail, on the outskirts of downtown. A few collective members lived upstairs from the infoshop and paid rent on the house, since donations and book sales weren't enough to cover the bills. The year that Sedition Books spent at that location on Old Spanish Trail was plagued with problems for the collective. The house wasn't zoned for commercial use and getting the permits necessary to open the space to the public would have cost the collective thousands of dollars. So while Sedition Books wasn't technically open for business last year, the collective still hosted film screenings, dance parties, and meetings for local activist groups. Library card holders were able to check out zines and books from the Sedition Books lending library during those events. As of this writing (April '08), the Sedition collective has moved out of the space on Old Spanish Trail and is currently looking for a new space, where they hope to have regular open hours. They need volunteers and donations and can be contacted through their webpage: Myspace.com/SeditionBooks.

Q and A with Chuck S., Sedition Books, Houston, TX

Lauren: Do you find that working collectively is a good way to put your anarchist ideals into practice?

Chuck: Absolutely, although sometimes the amount of time that consensus decision-making takes can be extremely frustrating. It can even get very heated and emotional. Having one person call all the shots would be way faster, but then only their interests are being

represented. Working collectively lets the project be truly accountable to its own demographic. The people doing the work are the same people calling the shots. It's not just one boss imposing their will on all the workers.

Lauren: What is the process somebody would have to go through to become a collective member at Sedition Books?

Chuck: The process that we have lined out—it's always up for review/change, though—for joining the collective consists of attending three consecutive collective meetings (the third one being their first as a collective member). During that time period, the volunteer (potential collective member) should take an active role in the going-ons by helping an existing member with their duties. The volunteer would also be trained on the different policies and procedures that we have before joining the collective.

Lauren: Do you make a profit from selling books and library memberships?

Chuck: Yes and no. When we sell a book at a list price of \$10, but we bought it wholesale for \$6. That's technically a profit. But none of that money goes to payroll or into anyone's pocket. All the money goes directly back into the project. All profit goes to paying rent, bills, buying supplies, and expanding our merchandise.

Lauren: Why are you all willing to spend so much time and energy at Sedition if you're not getting paid to be there?

Chuck: I feel like it's a worthwhile thing. One of the most worthwhile, actually. I can't go around just lobbing Molotov cocktails and bricks through the windows of the bourgeoisie and politicians—instead, I want to help educate the people. I can only hope that if more and more infoshops are successful in introducing these ideas into communities, that with everyone on board, we might one day actually be able to bring about the radical changes we want to see.

Lauren: Does everybody work together on every aspect of the infoshop or do you split responsibilities up amongst the collective?

Chuck: Well, we have defined certain "jobs" that need a dedicated collective member to bottom-line. For example, there's a "librarian" position in charge of keeping track of the library, and there's a "bookkeeper" in charge of doing the finances. We review and sometimes

rotate those positions monthly. But, being the “merchandise” person doesn’t bar you from helping the librarian sort books. And just because the responsibilities are up for rotation, doesn’t mean that we have to rotate. If everyone’s okay with me being the “tech” person, then I can do it month after month. There are also situational responsibilities that don’t really fall under a certain person’s “job,” so we either all work on it, or somebody offers to take on the responsibility. This is where some more volunteers could be a big help.

Lauren: Describe the space on Old Spanish Trail (OST), where Sedition Books moved after the fire. Who lived there and how did you keep the infoshop separate from your living space? What was living in an infoshop like?

Chuck: In theory, the infoshop was downstairs, and upstairs was our house (myself, Ben, and Ashley being “us” for the most part—not to count out Nick, Steven, Johnny, Andy, Sealu, and Hyphe, who all lived at 4816 at one point or another). Living in an infoshop can be a fucking amazing experience, and it can be fucking frustrating too. Almost 50/50. Meeting so many great people and literally having a library in my living room was awesome, but it also usually meant that the “live-ins” were usually the ones who ended up cleaning everything and doing the work no one else wanted to do or even thought about. It was hard not to come home and set your stuff down downstairs and then forget about it, like you might do in your own living room or kitchen. In fact, I can’t really say it was hard, because that’s what most of us who lived at 4816 did. A good example would be that it wasn’t ever hard to attend a meeting or event, because it’s going on right downstairs. But on the other hand, it’s not easy to get away with skipping one.

Lauren: Favorite memories from the last year while Sedition Books has been on OST?

Chuck: The last—almost—year living at Sedition has been unlike anything else I’ve ever experienced. One memory that sticks out is how I got really bad pneumonia three weeks after moving in. I wasn’t even really acquainted yet with Ben or Ashley, but here I was sick as shit, sleeping all day on the couch downstairs half-naked. It was the middle of July, way too hot to be upstairs, and I was half-delirious. I kept thinking it was Ashley’s cats that were making me so sick.

Lauren: What does the collective plan to do differently at the new space to avoid running into the same problems that you’ve encountered in the last year?

Chuck: First, we’re looking for a space that already has the certifications and permits that we need to operate a business. Also, we’ve re-examined our mission and purpose, and are looking for a space that meets specific criteria for the project.

Lauren: What are you looking forward to most about moving Sedition into a new space?

Chuck: Other than not living in it? I’m tremendously excited about the infoshop feeling a little more “real.” I’m excited about actually getting to work a shift and have walk-in customers who don’t have to call ahead. I think we will all be able to take a huge, deep breath when we get there.

Lauren: What do you think are the toughest challenges that the Sedition collective will have to handle over the next few months?

Chuck: Not losing speed just because we don’t have a space right now. Hopefully, we will all stay just as committed and focused on the project.

Profile: Monkeywrench Books in Austin, TX

Located in a middle class neighborhood a few minutes north of the massive University of Texas campus, Monkeywrench Books is a well-known part of Austin for intellectuals, punks, activists, and hipsters of all sorts. They sell books on topics such as feminism, globalization, and Chicano studies as well as comics, zines, magazines, and other merchandise. The collective also hosts film screenings, DIY workshops, and discussion groups. Bands including Shinobu, Scout’s Honor, and We Vs. The Shark, all played shows at Monkeywrench Books this year during Austin’s annual South by Southwest music festival. Monkeywrench Books has been open for six years, and with the support of volunteers and the local community, it has expanded from a tiny infoshop to an important central hub for many political activities in Austin. Monkeywrench Books is open daily until 8 PM, and has events almost every day of the week. You can see their event calendar and some of the books and magazines they carry online at www.MonkeyWrenchBooks.org.

Q and A with Rich E., Monkeywrench Books, Austin, TX

Lauren: How long have you been volunteering with the infoshop?

Rich: Six and a half years. Six years in the existing store; benefits and planning before that.

Lauren: Describe Monkeywrench Books; inside and out.

Rich: Monkeywrench Books is located in a residential neighborhood in a row of small, independent businesses. It serves as a community space for meetings of all kinds. We also host speakers, authors, films, benefits; basically anything we have the time and space for that is deemed worthy of our time. In the past, we also hosted many musical events but new neighbors have caused us to keep the amps off for the most part. It is, of course, also a radical book store and infoshop where people can peruse books or find out about local events and happenings. We try to utilize the space as much as possible with all these different things.

Lauren: Why do you think the collective model works so well for infoshops?

Rich: It keeps people interested and motivated to help the store continue to exist and do well when everyone in the collective has a part in its “ownership” and well being.

Lauren: What is your favorite memory as a volunteer?

Rich: It’s hard to pick any one. For me, it would be some of the great



**Monkey Wrencher of
the Year, Cale**

SHOT BAKER

TAKE CONTROL



Photo by: Brendan Lekan

**SHOT
BAKER**

TAKE CONTROL

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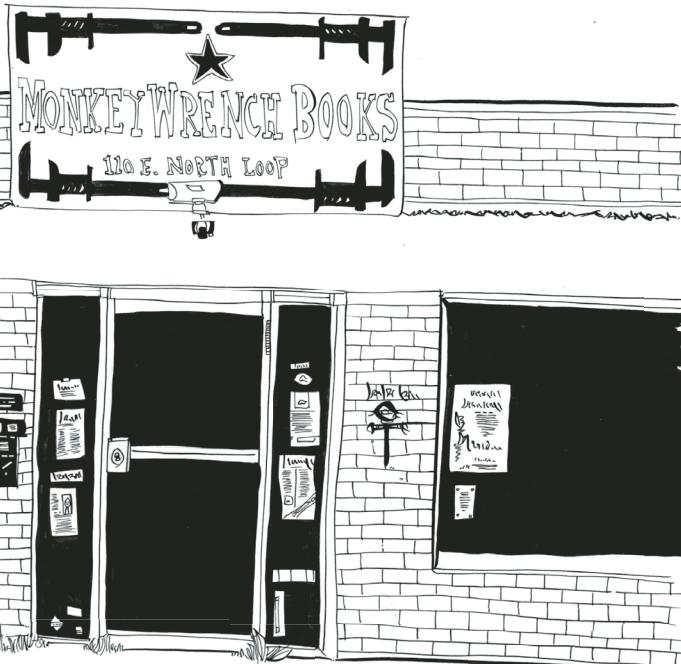
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Infoshop! Infoshop!



Monkey Wrench Books

bands we've been able to have play at the store, or maybe Noam Chomsky, who's a world famous political commentator, event we tabled with Monkeywrench Books and sold tons of books at. We sometimes set up a table at different events around Austin, sell books, and have info on Monkeywrench.

Lauren: Are each of you assigned jobs or does everybody work together on every aspect of the infoshop?

Rich: Well, there is no assigning of jobs. Jobs are just voluntarily undertaken. We have different committees: fundraising, book ordering, accounting, etcetera, that take care of specific things, but everyone is free to volunteer on whatever committee they would like. For events, we have bottomliners: people who are in charge of the event and the store during the event.

Lauren: How do you decide who has to do the less glamorous jobs in the infoshop—like cleaning the toilet and all that?

Rich: Yeah, again, it's all on a volunteer basis, so that decision is never made. It just gets done eventually.

Lauren: How formal is the structure of your collective?

Rich: We use the consensus process model with a facilitator, note taker, and sometimes a person will "take stack" (order of hands raised). So, it is a formal structure of sorts, but not too formal.

Lauren: Is there any particular issue that has presented a big challenge to the collective in the last year?

Rich: Well, some of the professors at the University of Texas who support Monkeywrench have set it up to where students have the option to buy their textbooks for a particular course at our infoshop, and handling the orders and returns for the textbooks has been somewhat stressful for us this year. But other than that, it's been fairly smooth.

Lauren: What positive benefits would we all see if more businesses were collectively run?

Rich: Less money-hungry greed in the world?

Profile: Wooden Shoe Books in Philadelphia, PA

The Wooden Shoe has been through a lot since its first incarnation as a communist bookstore in the '70s. Over the years, collective members came and went; and somewhere along the way, the collective shifted its focus to include literature that covered a broader spectrum of radical thought. At thirty years old, Wooden Shoe Books is the oldest infoshop on the East Coast, but the collective is as full of energy and enthusiasm for the project as ever. The infoshop's weekly movie nights, thousands of titles, and record selection of socially conscious punk, indie, hip hop, and hardcore artists, reflect the efforts of the collective to make Wooden Shoe Books a unique and lasting part of the Philadelphia community. Collective member James G., interviewed for this article, is the Wooden Shoe infoshop's unofficial historian. He once filled over eighty pages transcribing interviews with past and present Wooden Shoe collective members, using their memories to write a pamphlet that documents the infoshop's history. The Wooden Shoe's mission statement, along with a calendar of events and book reviews written by collective members can be found on their website: WoodenShoeBooks.com

Q and A with James G., Wooden Shoe Books, Philadelphia, PA

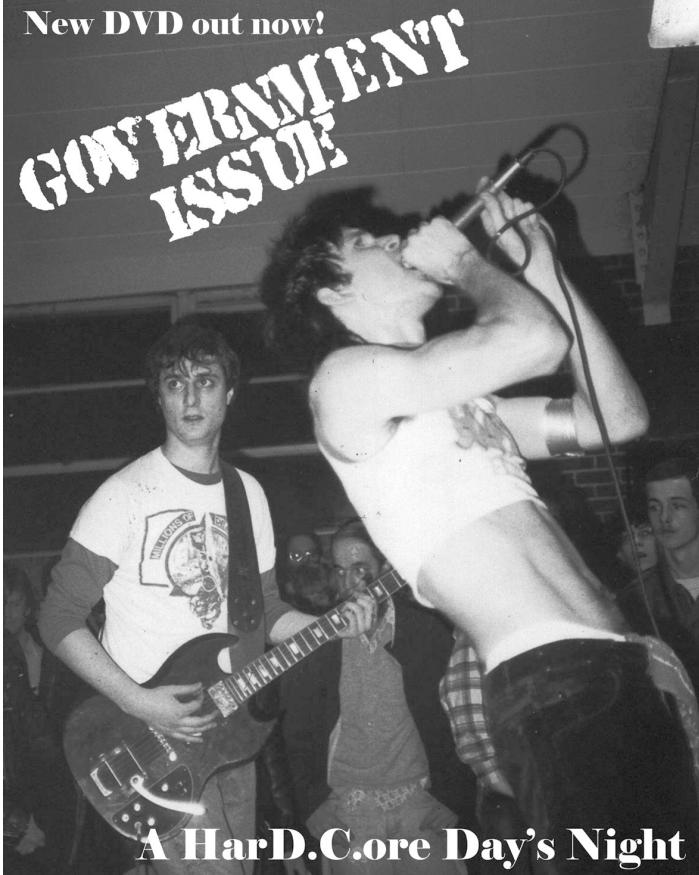
Lauren: Describe Wooden Shoe's location and what purposes it serves.

James: We're located on the commercial corridor of South Street, which is a tourist-y area with lots of "weird" stuff (though changing rapidly). Wooden Shoe's purpose is to serve as a bookstore, events venue, and very small movie theater.

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Infoshop Collective



James G., Wooden Shoe Books

Lauren: How long have you been volunteering with the infoshop?

James: Since November 2000.

Lauren: What is your favorite thing about working at the infoshop? Your favorite memory as a collective member?

James: My favorite aspect has always been talking to people who come into our doors looking for something different. The wide-eyed "Wow, I can't believe a place like this exists" look is my favorite. I have two favorite memories: 1) The first retreat I took part in during the summer of 2005. We were able focus on getting a lot of projects into gear. 2) The 2006 Infoshop Gathering in Baltimore, MD. There, we talked with people from more than twenty different infoshops across the country. I felt like we were a part of something a lot bigger.

Lauren: Why do you think the collective model works so well for infoshops?

James: Usually people starting infoshops believe in direct democracy, so it's pretty natural to structure the organization around people's beliefs. I don't know if the collective model necessarily works better than regular owner-type business models, since infoshops fail at about the same rate as regular businesses. One thing going for us is that the business itself doesn't fold when one person gets sick of doing it, since there's a whole big collective running the project. As long as we can keep up leadership development; the Wooden Shoe infoshop continues.

Lauren: Do collective members each have a certain duties outside of staffing the store?

James: People volunteer for extra-duty jobs like treasurer or secretary or book ordering, and generally commit a year to those jobs. Normal day staffing stuff, like counting money, restocking books, putting out recycling, mopping, and sweeping, are shared by everyone doing shifts. Sometimes projects at the Wooden Shoe just start because someone is interested in doing something and they take the energy and make it happen. For instance, I started a movie night on Saturdays at the infoshop a year and half ago, and now it's taken off to where we usually get at least ten to thirty people per movie night (free, with popcorn!).

Lauren: What are collective meetings at the Wooden Shoe infoshop like?

James: We have committees and groups of people doing tasks such as figuring out a budget, book ordering, events, and such. We use consensus, so everyone must agree to a proposal before it can pass.

People can also block, in which case the conversation continues and usually there is some sort of compromise, or people can stand aside if they don't fully agree with the decision taking place but don't want to block it. More day to day stuff is delegated to the extra-task people.

Lauren: What problems has the collective encountered this year?

James: Probably sexism and the amount of women to men in the collective. It's been a real tough year as far as internal stuff.

Lauren: What positive benefits would we all see if more businesses were collectively run?

James: Capitalism, as we know it, would fall if all businesses were collectively run, so that probably won't happen since the ruling class would do something to smash them up. But if more were running that way, we would live in a much more democratic society than we do now. Right now, we live in an economy tyranny where people generally have next to no say in how their workplace is run unless they are the owner or a high-level manager.

Sources/ Further Reading

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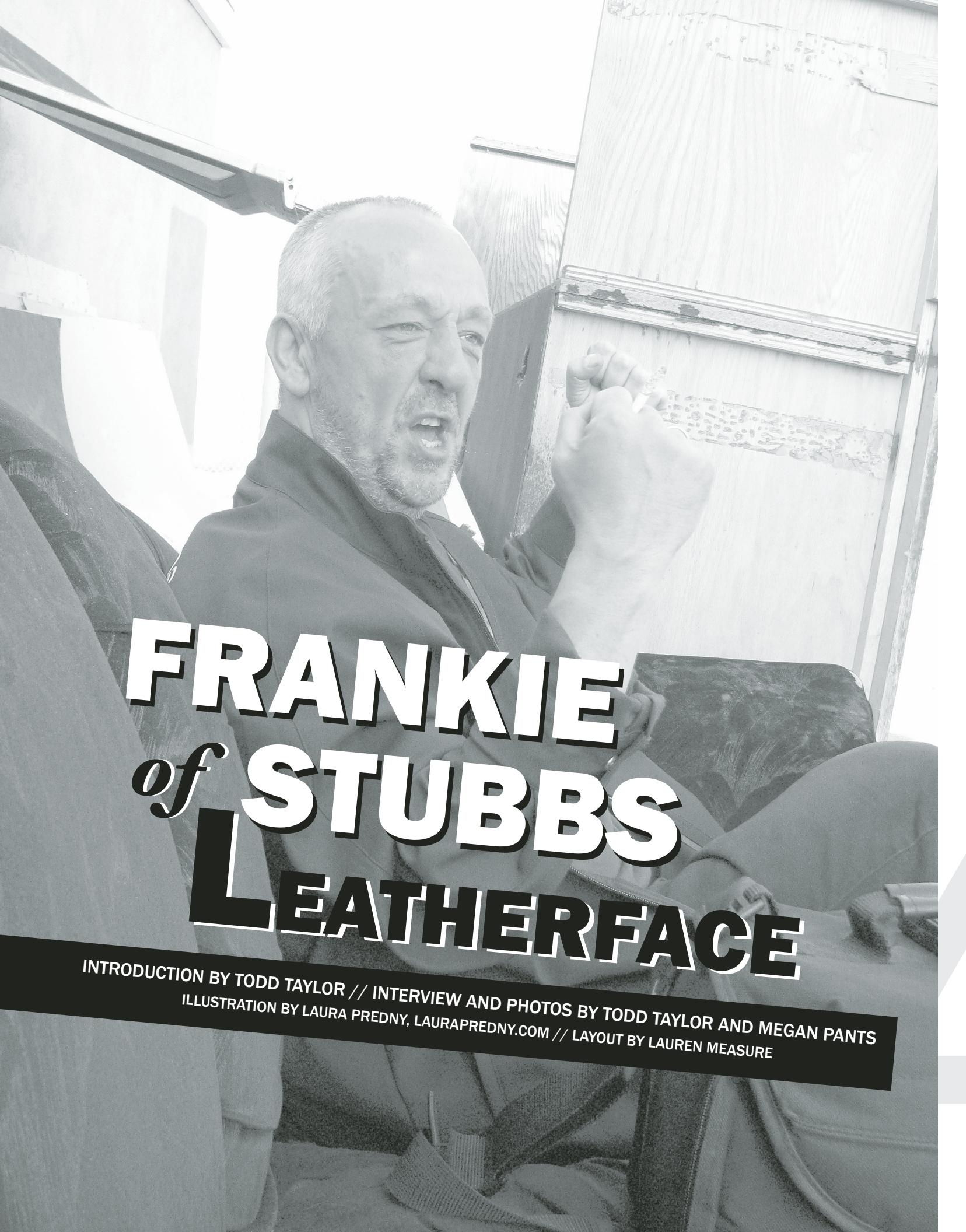
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FRANKIE *of* STUBBS LEATHERFACE

INTRODUCTION BY TODD TAYLOR // INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR AND MEGAN PANTS
ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA PREDNY, LAURAPREDNY.COM // LAYOUT BY LAUREN MEASURE

I wasn't impressed with Leatherface the first time I listened to them. Or the second. I thought they sounded a little bit like Motörhead, without the metal. There was nothing fancy or flashy about the music, but there was something invisibly stringing me to the CD, because I kept playing it while I had plenty else to listen to. Little, viral guitar bits would get me in the shower. Snatches of lyrics accompanied me as I waited in line at the post office. A hidden fuse burned, lit by a band from Sunderland, England.

I was having a bad year. My grandmother had died. My truck caught fire on the freeway after it backfired so badly that the rear of the muffler shot completely off. For a full minute on the side of the road, I just sat, holding the steering wheel, smoke rising. By the smell of it, spark plug wires were burning. Leatherface's *Mush* played on the cassette player. It was the song "Springtime." I turned it up as loudly as those shitty speakers would go.

"There's a little bit of springtime in the back of my mind," Frankie Norman Warsaw Stubbs sang. It was his unmistakably frayed burlap and smoke voice. "You're a drop in the middle of a big sea of high and mighty things."

I'm not going to say that Leatherface saved my life, but it was that bit of encouragement I needed to stop the roulette wheel of waiting to see if my truck was really going to explode. I got out and popped the hood. The fuel line was in serious jeopardy, already tacky to the touch. I snuffed out the flames.

I got back inside the truck and just sat and listened to *Mush* twice more on the side of the freeway. It was like the first time I'd ever heard the record. It just detonated. It became thick and real and jagged. I felt like I was able to touch the music and the music was sticking to me. Forthright. Literate. Unpretentious. Hard-bitten without bravado. Guitars that swarmed like bees around a hidden hive of melody. How hadn't I heard it that way, listening to the same notes all of those times before? I have no idea.

Right when I seriously contemplated how much I could tolerate as loss, Leatherface held out a voice, a verse, and a possibility when I needed it the most. For music—any music—to be capable of that is a powerful testament. For that, I'm grateful.

Since that time, I've come to celebrate Leatherface's entire catalog, all the way from 1989's *Cherry Knowle* through 2004's *Dog Disco*. I also came to realize them as the wellspring of a veritable army of great bands—from *Tiltwheel* and *Hot Water Music* to *The Grabass Charlestons* and *The Tim Version*—who have emerged from their wake.

It's with great pleasure that in an alley behind a bar, sitting on an overturned shopping cart and on a sofa put out to the trash, that *Razorcake* got to interview one of the main inspirations of why we started this zine in the first place.

Frankie Norman Warsaw Stubbs: Guitar, vocals

Dickie Hammon: Guitar

Musch: Drums

Graeme Philliskirk: Bass

Megan: I usually never ask this question but how did Leatherface start?
Frankie: Well, the interview is over, now. We have three questions. If the first question is "Give me a brief history of the band..." It started because me and Dickie, we used the same guitars. He was in punk bands that were like The Exploited. I always liked the Pistols. I'm a little bit earlier than him. He brought out this very fuckin' rare guitar. Only two people used it. Me and him started talking to each other in a bar. "Oh, you've got a Gordon Smith. Let's start a band." That's pretty much the story of how Leatherface started. It was more to do with the guitar.

Todd: What's so rare about the guitar?

Frankie: They were handmade in Manchester. No one knew about Gordon Smith. You've got to have a Fender; you've got to have a Gibson. When we met Snuff, he had a Gordon Smith. And now, pretty much every punk rock band in the world has a Gordon Smith. It's Marshall (amps) / Gordon Smith. It's part of the fashion.

Todd: Is it an expensive guitar?

Frankie: No. Fuckin' big shed, next door to a launderette. If you

walked down the street, you'd never know there were guitars being made in there. We went there, first time, just to see where these guitars were made. There's this thing. It looks like a cast iron mangle and it's got a handle. It looks like your grandma would dry her clothes with this thing. It's got a sign on the wall: "At least 5,000 turns." I had the pleasure of doing it. You turn this handle twenty, thirty, forty, fifty times and you write down in this book, next to it, how many turns you did. A (guitar) pickup. Hand-wound. It's special. No two sound the same. There are also shit ones.

Todd: Who did you hear that had a Gordon Smith?

Frankie: No one. I had a Gibson SG. It got stolen. Went in the guitar shop in Newcastle, in England. Fuckin' guitar sitting there. Looked at it. Beautiful.

Todd: I know the guitar from seeing *Tiltwheel*. Davey plays one.

Frankie: The first time we came, me and Davey swapped. He gave me an Epiphone TV model, like Johnny Thunders' Les Paul, and I



was thinking, "I've been done." He got the better deal. It's got a real Gibson P90 (pickup) on it.... [Frankie looks at Megan.] I know that girls get very uninterested in the technical talk...

Megan: And girls don't know math? How is that comment any better?

Frankie: Only a guy would be interested in hand-winding a pickup. You'd be thinking, "Dude? What the fuck is that?" So you'd like to hand-wind something?

Megan: I'm not not interested in it.

Frankie: All you're thinking about is getting your tooth put back in.

Megan: True.

Frankie: For the record, Megan's the only person alive who gets a tooth knocked out while she was swimming. I've never known water to knock anyone's tooth out. That's bad dentistry, dear.

Megan: There was crowd surfing the night before. I got hit in the

frankie stubbe



mouth twice. It was totally knocked loose. So, technically, when you were playing...

Frankie: I think it looks quite nice. Your tooth is my fault... The girl, Erin, who got arrested and beaten up by the police, who was sitting on the toilet with her knickers around her ankles, passed out, that's my fault as well? Your tooth, the girl with bruises off the police. That's all my fault.

Megan: Way to come to America and fuck us all up.

Todd: I want to talk about *Mush*, the album. You may disagree, but a lot of people consider it to be the definitive Leatherface record. It's the hardest Leatherface album to get. How did you meet the guy who actually signed you to Roughneck Sounds?

Frankie: Roughneck Sounds, is now, independently, one of the biggest record companies still independent. One of the biggest record companies, probably anywhere. He's copied by major labels now. It's now Domino Records in England and he has Franz Ferdinand, Arctic Monkeys, probably all the cool indie bands that come out of the United Kingdom. He heard a demo. He was getting a ride across London from Snuff, to go to some gig. He was good friends with them. In their van, they had *Cherry Knowle* on. He was like, "Who's this?" We were on tour in Europe for two months. When I got home, my girlfriend said, "This fucking guy, Laurence, is fucking calling all of the time. I keep telling him, 'He's on tour,' and he just wouldn't let it go." He came up to see us. My girlfriend at the time, she was a little bit... you know, female... all that intuition shit. We were wondering what he looked like. He'd come up to see us. We were playing local, where we live, and this guy walked through the door. It was probably like a four hundred people place. It wasn't that full. She saw him come through. It's this guy in an RAF pilot's jacket from the Second World War, which had bullet wounds. It must have been from a dead RAF pilot. She went, "That's him." On her word, I just walked over. "Laurence?" Because he didn't have a fuckin' clue what we looked like. "How'd you know it was me?" "It's me girlfriend." I didn't get weird about it. She just knew.

Todd: He signed you to Roughneck Trade. Is it just in America that it got picked up by Seed?

Frankie: Fire Records owns Roughneck Recording Company and Paper House. They just licensed everything on their catalog to Atlantic. All artists. It was a blanket. It didn't fuckin' matter who the band was. Seed was just Atlantic. When you called up Seed, it was, "Hello, Atlantic Records" and you were put through to Seed. The idea was when we were planning our first tour—when we came over to the United States—because Leatherface is copyrighted to *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, we were going to have come here under a different name. That's how the first tour fell through.

Megan: Did you go through many names?

in England that had named themselves McDonald's or something. They're called McDougal's, but he used a slightly McDonald's "M" and they've been sued by McDonald's and told not to do that again. There was a band on the label with us called Captain America, which is a Marvel comic thing, and they were sued and they had to change their name to something that was really shit. But they actually did change their name to something else. That wasn't because they were coming to the States. The other band on that label at that time was called Midway Still. Really good band, right, but they changed their logo to the Marks & Spencer logo, hoping to be sued because the best thing any company could do was sue a band for using their logo.

We were thinking of every company in the world that starts with "L." The only one we could think of is Lidl, which is this very chic German supermarket. The good thing about it is that people who work there get paid really well. They're on seven pounds an hour for sitting on the checkout. At the time in England, people were earning half that. We couldn't think of any companies. Lipton's tea. American companies still sue the fuck out of the tiniest businesses just for encroaching on anything that looks like their copyright. It wasn't an important thing to Atlantic that we couldn't come here, called Leatherface, which is pretty much why we never came, I think. We were supposed to three times and they still went on about changing the name. "What are we going to fuckin' do? This is the band's name. What are we going to change it to?" Featherlace? We were doing anagrams of Leatherface: The Eel Farce. That's really appropriate because that's pretty much what we are.

Todd: With the actual recording of *Mush*, why can't you, as a band, re-release it?

Frankie: This, I knew. The contract, Fire Records signed you up. We cannot re-record those songs, even. And I wrote in there, "What about a fuckin' live album? We want to do a live album." They were like, "Alright, a bonafide live album." So they're going to screw anyone who does a bootleg. If we want to do a live album later on, we can do that, but we can't re-record them, fiddle about with them to make them sound like they're slightly different.

Todd: Or extended intros.

Frankie: I've got the technology to edit them around a bit. We put another couple layers of guitar on there. We could do it. They're not going to sue us. They know they fucked us over. They all know. Every single record company knows they've fucked us over. They're not going to take us to court because all the books have to come in and we all learn how many records we sold. They haven't paid us anything. They're fucked. That's why, I think, we can get away with re-releasing our own records. It's not legal, but I don't think they want to go to court.

Fire Records, not long ago, they got in touch. They wanted to streamline their statement. "For costs," they were saying. "It's a waste of time, sending you statements because all of your records are deleted. We're not giving you any money. But we'll give you £1,500 to get out of having to send you statements every six months." So, I'm like, "What the fuck is going on here?" Because I'm very suspicious. "All right, they're up to something."

Todd: They wouldn't pay you £1,500 if they didn't owe you more than that.

Frankie: I'm going along with this. You give me £1,500; I split it amongst the band. You don't have to send us statements anymore, and I just sat there, "This motherfucker is up to something." I'm anti-lawyer. This is the business. Everyone's getting fucked. All record companies are run by lawyers who know fuck-all about music. I just thought, "I'll do this." He sends me the fuckin' contract. That takes a while. I sat there. "This is really weird." And I just stretched it out as long as possible.

Then they re-released all three albums we did on Fire Records. Obviously, they had a release date. They've got to get me to sign this because there's no royalties coming our way after that—there wasn't any before that—so I sat there. There were reviews in all the magazines. It was so easy. I should have just worked it out. The signing of this contract meant they would never have to give us a statement or pay us a royalty again. Now, I didn't sign it, but I still haven't received a statement or a royalty. It doesn't fuckin' matter. I fuckin' hate the bastards.

We don't have loads of Gunnar Hansen fans turning up, going "What the fuck is this?"

Frankie: We didn't even bother. "What? We've got to change our fuckin' name to go on tour in the States? They're fairly big on copyright there." Nobody gives a fucking shit about us. Jesus Christ. We don't have loads of Gunnar Hansen fans turning up, going "What the fuck is this?" "Oh, by the way, he does look a bit like Leatherface."

Megan: Don't those copyrights not cross over, if you're not doing a movie?

Frankie: American copyright law—well, I wouldn't like to read it, actually—but there are small, independent cafés, small restaurants,

we collect records — when my father was a kid, he collected shrapnel from the bombs.



The thing was, they re-packaged it. All nice and fancy. The sleevey ones. "Can we at least have a copy? Send us a box, maybe?" There are four people in the band playing on those records. They sent us two.

Megan: What's your biggest regret you have because of a woman?

Frankie: Married one.

Megan: I heard something about the scooter that you gave up.

Frankie: That wasn't really a regret. She probably did me a favor. Fuckin' oily piece of shit, bits around me living room. People would come in. Lots of bands would stay at me house. One guy found a record in me record collection. It was Leatherface's first single and the guy says, "I've been looking for this for fuckin' ever." I said, "It's yours." "Will you sign it?" The only thing I had to sign it with was Lambretta oil. I didn't have a pen. "This is going to smudge."

Todd: Did Snuff sing about that scooter?

Frankie: No, they wrote about their own. They laughed about mine. They came and stayed. "Are you ever going to put it back together?" "Fuckin', it was in one piece when I bought it." Honestly, mine's just pockets of springs and bits of shit. Friend of mine who's a biker—Triumphs, Bonnevilles—"I'll come around. I'll help you fix it." He came around. He took it to bits. He never came around to help me put it back together. I should have known this was going to happen because there's bits of fuckin' Triumphs all around his flat. He never put a bike together in his life. He'd just taken them apart.

Regrets. I regret everything and nothing. I regret that I wasn't a better person. I regret that I didn't try harder. I regret hurting people. I don't regret much for myself. I should have treated some people better and I didn't. Bit of regret. When I agreed to marrying someone, it's for her. I shouldn't have fuckin' married her. She would have been far better off having not being married to me. I should have been a better person. It's not heavy.

Todd: What do your parents do?

Frankie: They're fuckin' retired.

Todd: Were they in the Battle of Britain?

Frankie: No, they were kids. Me father, in the Battle of Britain—we collect records, we collect whatever—when he was a kid, collected shrapnel from the bombs. Sunderland, it's not really that well known, was one of the most bombed towns in the U.K. because there was a huge coal mine and ship building. Bombs still get found there, that didn't go off. About four, five years ago. This is irony. They were building a health center and they were digging down and they went, "dink." Hit metal. They dug this thing out. A thousand pound bomb. It's pretty much the size of a car. Still finding these things. When they evacuated the bomb, it was a hundred yards from where I lived. They evacuated the whole area. They got this bomb and put it on a flatbed truck, to take it down to the beach—we've got miles of beaches in Sunderland—for a controlled explosion.

Everyone in Sunderland came down. They were lining the streets, watching this truck do about five miles an hour with a thousand pound bomb on the back of it. It was like, "Yes!" It was, actually, fifty fuckin' yards from where my mother lived when she was a little girl. They were lying underneath a wrought iron bed. They heard the bombers coming over. Dove underneath. And, apparently, a thousand pound bomb came through the roof. That one that they found five years ago must have been on the same raid. My parents were war children. The only time my country's ever been bombed, it was coming down all around them. When kids start giving old people shit these days, I sorta think, "Fuck you, man." They lived in a time when this town was bombed and bombed and bombed. Fuckin' not right.

Todd: My father was born in the Channel Islands between England and France.

Frankie: Jersey was the only occupied part of the U.K.

Todd: They took down all of the street signs so the Nazis couldn't easily orient themselves.

Frankie: That happened all over the U.K. Spies were being parachuted in. If anybody asked you questions, no one would say where things were. People weren't traveling around that much at that time. Stay in your homes. If someone turns up in your town, going, "Excuse me, can you tell me where the Ministry of Defense is?" you phone the police and they take them away. Sunderland was bombed to fuck. Now it looks like concrete blocks. You go up a really nice street and there's a huge concrete block in the middle of these really Victorian, old buildings. It was just a hole there at some point. Winter Gardens was all glass. Huge. All arches. A bomb went off about a hundred yards away from it. Took all the glass out. Never rebuilt it.

Todd: Did you know about the Victoria Hall disaster when you a kid?

Frankie: In Sunderland? Of course. It was just down the road from where I lived. The stampede. There was a fire. They all ran towards the doors. At that time, all of them ran for the doors and they opened inwards. They were all pressed against the doors and they couldn't

open them, so they burned. All kids. Hundreds of kids. After that, the law was changed. Fire doors had to open out. It's fucking logical. If doors open inward and people are pressed against it, there's no way you ever going to get that fucker open. You're just going to die. Fuckin' horrible. That's, literally, two hundred yards from where that bomb was found. That hall doesn't exist any more. That was blown up as well. There's still nothing there. They never built anything to replace it.

Todd: Is there a memorial or a plaque?

Frankie: I'm sure there is. I never really looked. It was a big thing in Sunderland. Sunderland's very close.

Megan: Talking about Sunderland, your soccer team is in the premier league now. Does that change a town at all? Do you get more people who are instant fans?

Frankie: We've already got a million instant fans because our team is pretty much Irish. Owned by Irish, chairman's Irish, the coach is Irish. We have planeloads of Irish people coming in every week to see the game. I don't give a fuck about that because what will happen when the Irish go away? Or our Irish owners? It's just like a little trendy thing for the Irish to come. Thousands upon thousands turn up every week.

Megan: It's got to be revenue, in general, for the community.

Frankie: Just being in that league does. I think you get £30 million before you've even played a game.

Megan: Why have you stayed in Sunderland? I would think that, for music, it would probably be better to go to London.

Frankie: I'm actually in London now. For all intents and purposes, I'm still Sunderland. I don't think, in England, it matters that much. It used to matter. All bands moved to London. Now, you don't have to. Record companies were coming to Sunderland when we were found. John Peel would start playing fuckin' any band that came from Sunderland. Most of them I was recording and it sounded fuckin' shit. He played everything. John Peel picked Sunderland as this little hotbed of music—which it is. We've got to have more bands than any town in the country because we've got a little collective thing going. We've got practice studios. Record companies descended on the place. "Bands are no longer coming to us." Bands are no longer coming to London. It started with Manchester and Glasgow, then Sunderland. They should get off their fuckin' lazy asses. I would be in London and have people from the *New Musical Express*, the biggest music paper in the country, going to me, "What's the deal? Who's the new band?" "Get the fuck out and find them. You're getting paid a fortune for me giving you a piece of fuckin' information? Oh, by the way, Milloy are fuckin' great." At the time, it was China Drum.

Todd: How much do you think Sunderland influenced you lyrically and playing music?

Frankie: It was absolutely everything. Musically, I don't think it influenced me at all. If you went and watched music in Sunderland, you'd fuckin' kill yourself.

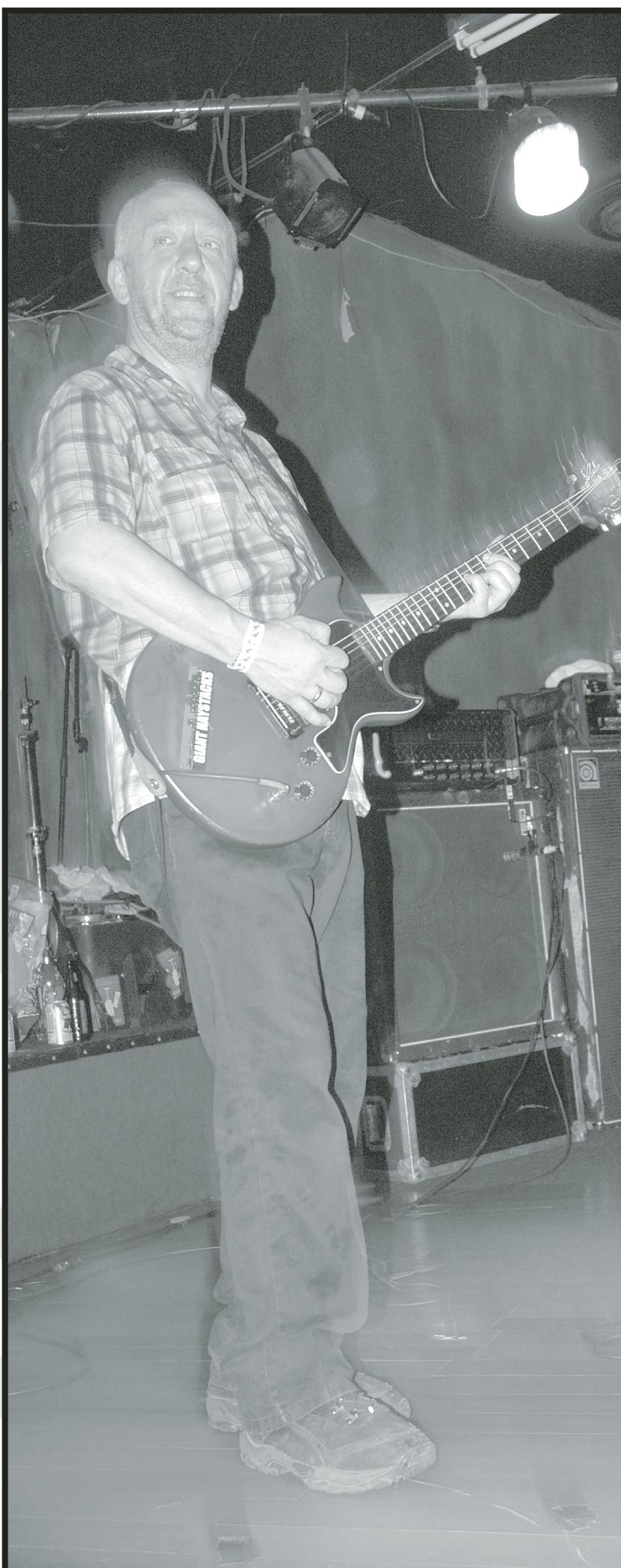
Todd: One of the guys from the Eurythmics was from Sunderland.

Frankie: Dave Stewart. There you go. Kill yourself. Most of the music is people from Sunderland doing the blues. Get the razorblades and aspirins. There you go, right. That's a perfect example. "Razorblades and Aspirin" is a Leatherface song. That's what it's about. I like Delta blues. I remember being in Detroit. It was an eighty-year-old black guy in a pub next door. It was inspiring. This fucker had a story to tell and he was telling it. It was beautiful. All they're doing in Sunderland is twentieth generation blues. It's not English. What the fuck are we going to complain about? I do believe that without the dole, the Beatles wouldn't have existed.

Todd: The Clash wouldn't have existed.

Frankie: None of the bands would have existed. All of the music that came out of Sunderland was because you could sit on your fuckin' ass, not do any work, and get money off the government. And it was never that much, but you knew you weren't going to starve. You knew you didn't have to take a job where you were earning less than you could earn from nothing.

Now I've got a daughter. I've got a proper job now. I've never had a proper job in my life. Now, because my daughter came along, I have to look after her. That's it. My life is fuckin' now over. As long as she's all right, I can do something with my life but then I have to go back and make sure she's all right again. She's all that's important. You lose that selfish, "Fuck, it doesn't matter what I do. I have no responsibility." Me father always said, "Do what the fuck you want until you've got responsibilities." And now I know what he meant by that.





Regrets. I regret everything and nothing.

Megan: How well does that work because Dickie has kids. Musch is about to have a kid...

Frankie: Graeme has a sixteen-year-old daughter.

Megan: So if you all have those responsibilities, how can you even make a band work?

Frankie: Some people deal with them slightly differently. I can only talk for me. She is everything. That's it. I would say that the band would take back seat. Make sure she's got nice clothes, food. Now, I'm able to come away... Her mother's got the most responsibility. We split up, so I'm the estranged father who throws money in every week. It's still important. She's working as well, but it just makes her life a little stressful without having to balance everything.

Todd: What's your job?

Frankie: I work the new Wembley Stadium. I look after the sound system there. Sometimes they let me turn it on. It's the fuckin' biggest PA system in the world. This is a huge stadium and when you turn it on, it sounds like it's going to take off, just the sound pressure. I always put on really obscure punk bands like Milroy, and they go, "Turn this shit off." "Fuck off. It's the only CD I've got. What else am I going to put on?" Every little shitty, little band that no one ever takes any notice of, but was really fuckin' good, I'm playing there through the biggest PA in the world. Davey, who used to bass for us, his new album of The Former Cell Mates, he sent me a copy. And that was a time when I had to turn the whole building on. All concourses. The whole fuckin' building.

But the other job, the one that I'm really embarrassed about, that's once a fortnight, once a month, I have to work in the houses of Parliament. The Palace of Westminster. We can only go in on the weekend. It's basically the same job. I have to make their sound systems work. So, if there's a fire, I have to make sure that the alarm goes off and they all get out alive. Which is [he shrugs] I'm not bothered. The weird thing was, I was properly vetted by MI5 (British secret service). They went into the family history. "Have you ever had anything to do with terrorists?" "No." "Have you ever tried to bring the government down?" "No, but I've thought about it every day of me fuckin' life." On and on. Me criminal record. Even parking fines going back twenty or twenty-five years. I had to write it all down. I was vetted. I was really happy. I was walking around, smiling all day. "All right, you're in." They give me a pass. "What the fuck do you mean, 'I'm in.'?"

All my anarchic, fuckin' punk history doesn't mean nothing to them. I've never voted. Never paid tax. Once I got over the depression: "What, I've been playing punk songs, slagging off the government all me fuckin' life?" They didn't even know. I took all them drugs. The guy I work, he got knocked back. He eventually got in.

The first day I walked in there, just to go and have a look, I was escorted around by security. "So where did Guy Fawkes try to blow this shit up, then?" There's a plaque on the wall. But when you're walking down the corridors—The United States, if you walked into The Oval Office, that's two hundred years old—you walk down these corridors—Oliver Cromwell fuckin' shit. It's going back five hundred and something years. Every piece of shit my country ever did was decided in this fuckin' building. When you walk down the corridors, it stinks of it. All the corridors are lined with books. Everything that's ever been said in there

has been written down in a fuckin' book. To me, I'm a little bit of an amateur historian. It's a historian's dream, walking in that building. Just standing in the House of Lords.

I joined the pub that they have in there. I was going to go there for the first time on my birthday, April 26th. I can just walk in there, you know. Police don't even look at me. I just show me pass. I've got a little PIN number. "Gordon Brown, you're a fucking cunt!" It's the only pub in England where you can smoke and everyone's really upset about it. "One law for them. One law for us." Can you imagine them having to come outside and have a smoke? There'd be snipers on top of every fuckin' in London trying to take the bastards out.

Megan: My dad was denied a security clearance. He was drafted into Vietnam and the only thing he can figure out is that he had a subscription to *Mother Jones*.

Frankie: What the fuck is *Mother Jones*?

Megan: A left wing political magazine.

Frankie: Oh, in this country, you're fucked, then. I'm sure they know how left wing I am. In my country, you can be left of left of left and no one thinks twice about this. This country has got a left wing. You had the McCarthy witch hunts. You had people like Charlie Chaplin being deported. Looks like Hitler. Hitler's a national socialist, Charlie's a fuckin' socialist. You know, they were born on the same day, same year? 1889. I can't remember the exact date. And they look uncannily alike and you never see them in the same room. Like a Clark Kent suit, mind you. The only difference is that you never really heard Charlie talk. Hitler was always "Sieg heil, sieg heil." Charlie was a quiet Socialist.

Megan: Your lyrics are probably what first really got me into Leatherface. I really like your phrasing. What do you read?

Frankie: I have no idea. I read a lot. I tend to read mostly non-fiction. I don't read as much as I would even like to. I love just reading. The last book I just read was called *The Inquisition* (Michael Baigent). It was about the Spanish Inquisition. They proved that it still exists, to this day, but they call it the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith instead of the Inquisitors or the Holy Office, which is what they were called. Obviously, they're not burning people, but they're still looking for heretics and it's been going on for eight hundred years.

They're terrified. You know the funniest thing about them? The pope has said on record: "We accept that there are other forms of life out there." Our government's telling us that there isn't. The Catholic Church is telling us there is. What they're panicking about is what happens if the alien life has never heard of Jesus? That completely turns their shit upside down. If Jesus created everything, then, surely, all these little people who live out there should have heard of Jesus. Can you imagine what this does to faith in this fuckin' world if these cunts have never heard of Jesus? So, this Ratzinger guy, the Panzer Pope, who's the new pope, he's like, "Well, we'll go there and convert them and free them of their sin."

If they've got the technology to come here and look at us: "What a bunch of dumb fucks they are." The Pope has got observatories looking for life out there manned by Dominican Lutherans, looking to find little green fucks who don't believe in Jesus to put on the stake. I'm not making this up. That arrogance is beyond me. Fine if you believe. Stop putting it on me. If Jesus turned up now, they'd fuckin' burn him. Absolutely. Fuckin' heretic. Excommunicated.

Todd: Did any English authors—I'm thinking about someone like Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*—especially resonate with you?

Frankie: That's one of my favorite books of all times. *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Absolutely fuckin' super... I don't

I'm a blank sheet of paper every day.
I wander through this world blind.

know. That's the simple answer. When I was doing English literature at school, I spent most of me time arguing with the teacher about, "Why am I reading F. Scott Fitzgerald? What the fuck has that got to do with English literature?" When I'm doing English literature, I'm thinking of that being English literature, as in English writers. I'm sure, in this country, you will do American literature for American writers and English literature for English writers. We were doing *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I'm arguing because that's the sort of asshole I am. After all of that, my favorite book of all time is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. I read it so many times. She only wrote the one, as far as I know, and it was the greatest piece of fucking literature I've ever read in me life. I've read it repeatedly. *Sense and Sensibility*, fuck it. *Romeo and Juliet*, fuck it. My English literature teacher, I should shake her fuckin' hand and kiss her on the lips. "You put up with my shit."

I read this book a little bit ago called *The Life of Pi* with a tiger living in a rubber dinghy for eighteen months. Fuckin' superb. The person writing it is Indian. So fuckin' well written. You know when you read this language and every word is in the right place? When I picked that up, it was fuckin' genius. So colorful, so lyrical. It is good. You should read it.

Megan: What happened with Dickie Hammond leaving the band?

Frankie: He always just leaves. He doesn't tell me. He just fucks off.

Megan: Wasn't there a fight on stage?

Frankie: There are fights everywhere. Are you talking about fisty?

Megan: No.

Frankie: We've never done any fisty shit.

Megan: That sounds dirty.

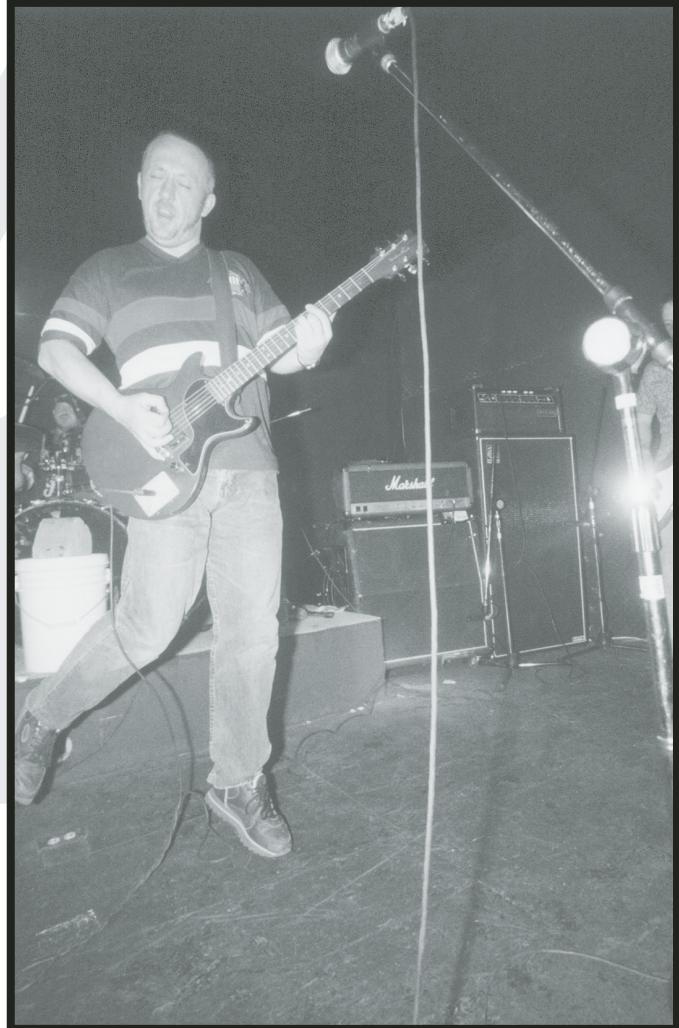
Frankie: Sorry for bringing horrible thoughts into your mind. Bands aren't all about being on stage. Bands are, like, always being in the fucking van. It's the nine hours a day in the van that's killing you. The hour on stage is what makes it worthwhile. So, I think what you're talking about is the fight on stage, which is the one where we hadn't talked to each other for a week and then we got on stage and we didn't even talk to each other on stage. When you're doing the sound check, you turn around and go, "So, what are we going to play?" We didn't even do that. We just stood there; the culmination of ignoring each other to the point of "We can't actually go on like this." He didn't leave. I just announced that "This will be the last time we will be playing London." It wasn't a fight on stage. It was the total opposite of that. Being a fight on stage, saying, "You fuckin' asshole," it would have been all fine, I'm sure. Arguing with each other is just part of being in a band. Part of friends. Part of life. But when you get to the point where you can't even talk to each other, then you know it's over. If you can talk, there's hope. If you can't talk, there's no fuckin' chance. What's the point?

Megan: On the converse, how did you end up playing together again?

Frankie: I guess we ended up talking. [laughs] If we'd never talked to each other, we wouldn't be playing again.

Megan: How did you end up talking?

Frankie: It was New Year's Eve. We drank at the same bar, pretty much. We hadn't really talked to each other for quite some time. I hate New Year, but it is a good time to take stock. Fuck it. I remember just sitting down with him. "I heard that Jesse single, *Indestructible*"—the other band I was in—"It's fuckin' brilliant. I was going to get one." "I'll post you one." That's when we actually started talking again. None of it matters. We were fuckin' good friends and we fell apart because of shit mainly to do with this business; not to do with us.



And we're a bit older now. We play good together. Instead of him going on about me being ratty in the morning. Me and him are like fuckin' man and wife or something—I'm the fuckin' man, by the way—I'm the giver, he's the receiver. This is the thing, right? I was living with this girl. I was in love her. I lived with her for six years. I spent more time with him than I did with her. I do believe that the time you spend apart is quite possibly as important as the time you spend together. If you're not with them, it's the absence that makes the heart grow fonder. Spending twenty-four hours a day together is not fucking healthy and it's not good for me because I do need to wander off and sit by myself. Dickie likes having people around him. I like walking over there, sitting next to a telegraph pole with a beer, not saying anything, talking to meself in my head, telling myself what a shit I am.

Todd: I don't know anything about guitar playing, but how you play guitar is distinctive. When I first heard Leatherface, it sounded like the two guitars were playing two completely different songs.

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Frankie: They are.

Todd: But they come together in a very strange way. The first time I saw you, I was expecting you to be aggressively involved with your instrument, because it sounds that way. Like, when I first saw Hot Water Music, Chris and Chuck were like bears attacking their instruments. But when you play, to me, it looks like you're popping bubbles with your fingertips on the fret board. You're not using a pick. Do you have any idea where that came from?

Frankie: I have no idea. There are probably four places I learned to play the guitar. It was the Sex Pistols, The Police, AC/DC, and Killing Joke. There are a few other bands that drift in there. The Ruts. I can't analyze it. I know how I learned to play the guitar; what I listened to when I was learning to play it. I used to put an album on and learn it from beginning to end by ear. Every single guitar part. I would leave out solos. Chords were always what I wanted. I wanted to be the best guitar player in the world, like every guitar player when you first start playing. I wanted to be the next Jimi Hendrix. After about two weeks, I realized that's never going to happen, so I went down the chord avenue. It was the chords and because I would get so bored playing your bog-standard barre chords, I started fucking about. I started making things up.

Todd: Because it doesn't sound noodley. It doesn't sound self-indulgent.

I'm actually starting
to analyze shit now,
but I'm going to stop.
I never want to
know what I'm
doing.

Frankie: I don't do the solo. I have no idea about chord progressions. I can't read the shit. I got very bored playing three-chord bash. The Ramones type. Nothing wrong with the Ramones. I just started putting my fingers in stupid places. "That actually sounds all right." I still get bored and because I've pretty much put my fingers in all those positions—ninety percent of that's fuckin' shit—I've started actually going through tuning guitars differently to where I just have to put two fingers on and the way the guitar's tuned, that's the sound and I will find chords that way. I'm still doing that. I'm still fucking about. More ringing notes. I just like the sound of chords. I keep looking for new chords all the time. I would say that's it. I can't play the guitar unless I start fucking about with it.

It's even the progression, not just the one chord. It's that chord going with that one and then that one, which I know nothing about. The Beatles were masters at chord progressions. Probably anyone who knows the slightest bit of shit about music would be, "That should be a minor seventh." I have no idea. I'm a blank sheet of paper every day. I wander through this world blind. "That's one. I found one. But it's not so much that one, it's the one it goes to." I call it the magic chord. "That one's a normal chord, that one's a normal one, that's a fucking weird one." The weird one's the magic one. I'm actually starting to analyze shit now, but I'm going to stop.



I never want to know what I'm doing. When I first started playing, all I did was try and learn other people's songs. I actually became very good at it. But I stopped doing it because the magic of the song is somehow lost when I knew how to play it. Something about when you learn the song, it loses something, its mystery. It's like a woman. Once you learn the woman, that's it. You're fucked. You marry her. But when you first meet her, "She's beautiful." But when you get to know her, "Fuck, she's fucking terrible." It's the end of the song. It's the mystery, you know?

Todd: Also the discovery.

Megan: That's depressing as shit. It makes me not want to listen to anything.

Frankie: What, am I depressing you? That's not depressing. That's just life.

Megan: Life's depressing.

Frankie: Of course it is. It's like, "You don't know shit, then you die." Try to avoid some shit. Get over it and move on.

Todd: Is your middle name, Warsaw, a family surname?

Frankie: I put them in meself. It was the name of our first band. Then we found out that Joy Division was called that.

Todd: What's the most sinister use you've ever had for a screwdriver?

Frankie: Stuck it in someone's neck... I didn't actually stick it in his neck, but I know what you're talking about. It was a long time ago. I was recording a band. It was like two in the morning. We were all drunk and he took offense at something that I said. He said, "I think I should tell you now. I'm a black belt and this is your first warning." You're supposed to give three fuckin' warnings or some shit like that. I was like, "I'll tell you what. Let's consider you've given me the three warnings. Let's dispense with the formalities. We ended leaving the studio, walking up the street. "C'mon, then. You've done the three... Give me the second one, then." He dropped me down on the ground, he's punching me in the head. I'm like, "Is that the best you can do? You're a black belt, for fuck's sake." He's fighting like a girl. I was just laying on the ground, letting him punch me. I didn't make any attempt to get up. He was half the size of me. "C'mon." So I stood up, right? I put me hand in me pocket, pulled out this screwdriver, put him up against the wall and stuck a screwdriver to his neck. "Black belt or not, you're fucked." And that was the story.

Now, the guy spent the night in hospital. Nothing to do with a screwdriver. He broke all his hands from hitting my face. Not a mark on me—well, I've got one of those faces—you can't tell. "Have you been punched to fuck, or what?" I have a few bumps there. He broke all his fuckin' knuckles. It was a complete night of stupidity. The rest of the band was actually walking around with me, apologizing for his behavior. "Sorry about that." All anybody remembers is the fuckin' screwdriver.



RK

RICH KIDS ON LSD

"Like If Jimi Hendrix Covers Slayer"

**Introduction and interviews conducted
by Jan Röhlik, *Trust Fanzine***

**Illustrations by Dan Sites
Layout & Graphic Design by Albert Lam**

**Remembrances by people who knew
(or were in) the band, collected by Jan.**

As Razorcake's own founder, Todd Taylor, once said in an email when I asked him about his personal experience with Rich Kids On LSD (RKL): "I met them once. We bowled next to them. On the last frame, one of those guys blew his knee out and the paramedics had to use a pizza box for a splint to carry him out of there. Simultaneously funny and sad." I think that story is very typical concerning this band from Santa Barbara. They existed from the beginning of the eighties until 2005 and played brilliant skateboard hardcore punk rock. In 1987 they released the album *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare* on Alchemy Records—It's the California version of the Bad Brains' *Rock for Light*.

Three band members died between 2005 and 2006, and this RKL memorial special is for them. Derrick Plourde (drummer) committed suicide on March 30, 2005. Richard Anthony Manzella, known to most as "Bomer" (drummer and part-time singer) died on December 12, 2005 from heart failure attributed to long-time drug addiction. Jason Sears (singer) died on January 31, 2006, in Tijuana, Mexico while receiving ibogaine treatment in the hopes of overcoming his drug addiction. This article is in homage of remembering one of punk rock's best live bands. Dan Sites, close friend to the band and responsible for all the artwork and the Beanie Man logo, said, "Sometimes RKL were really magic. It all clicked and they tore the roof off the place. All over the world. Jason was a real frontman... even when he was puking into the audience. Peace, my friends. Hope you're in a better space."

This feature was first published as a longer two-part special called "They Had Music in Their Blood" in the German *Trust Fanzine*, issue #127, December 2007/January 2008, and issue #128, February/March 2008. Have a good read with the stories and memories from those who knew them: Fat Mike of NOFX; Bomer's mother Sharron Rose; Doug Moody of Mystic Records; Lil' Joe Raposo, bass player for RKL; Mark Deutrom of Alchemy Records, RKL's second label; Barry D'Alive, guitar player for RKL who quit after their 1996 Japan Tour; Archie Alert or Destiny Tour Booking, Berlin, RKL's tour manager on the band's Europe Tour 1994; and Helge Schreiber, writer for the great German zine *Plastic Bomb Fanzine*.

Fat Mike, NOFX

Once Upon a Time in 1984...

Without RKL, there wouldn't be a NOFX. Well, there might be a totally shitty NOFX. Let's start over. Once upon a time in 1984 there was a totally shitty band called NOFX. We saw RKL play at the Sun Valley Sportsmens Lodge and were blown away. When their record *Keep Laughing* came out, we were just leaving on our first tour. We listened to it every fucking day for three months. This record changed everything for us. This was the band that we wanted to be, but couldn't pull it off. We recorded two 7" EPs for Mystic records. They sucked and couldn't even be played on the same turntable as RKL.

A year goes by. *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare* comes out. Now we're totally fucked. Suddenly, the best hardcore band of our time just got one hundred times better. This record is a landmark. No band has ever written anything like it and it was recorded and mixed in just five days. Once again, we were leaving on tour when it came out. This time we listened to it at least twice a day... everyday. I took acid for the first time and listened to it all night.

The next year, NOFX goes to Europe for the first time. We are known as "Friends of RKL." That was the polite way of saying "a shitty RKL clone band." Almost every live review and record review compared us to our mentors, but usually in a negative light. Hey, at least we were being compared.

A year or so later, the wheels started falling off the RKL train. The drug abuse and constant partying was taking its toll. Just when they were making history, they were history. I gotta say it was a good thing for NOFX. RKL was the band that we would always be in the shadow of. When they

"I met them once. We bowled next to them. On the last frame, one of those guys blew his knee out and the paramedics had to use a pizza box for a splint to carry him out of there."

broke up, we kinda took their spot. It was a good spot and no one else was using it, so we took it.

When they got back together years later, we did some shows together, but it was always weird. They knew we took their spot, and we knew that they knew we took their spot. Nonetheless, RKL and NOFX had always stayed close friends. Twenty years later, I pull out *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare* and put it on. I realize that after all these years of touring and recording my band still can't pull off any of this. I can't play these bass riffs, Melvin can't touch the guitar, and Smelly—who is a great drummer—can't even come close to what Bomer can do. Now Bomer, Jason, and Derrick are gone, but at least the magic they left behind can never be replaced.

Interview with Sharron Rose, Bomer's Mother *Though They Lived Well, the Relationship Eroded Tragically*

Jan: I don't think most parents would be very happy if their loved kid informed Mom and Dad that he was going to make a punk band at age fourteen. Was it difficult for you to support Bomer or was it more like, "If he wants to do that, go for it."

Sharron: I always supported him completely in his art and music, and observed immediately that he was "different," special, and extremely talented in so many areas. However, I did make him finish school when he wanted to drop out. His math teacher predicted Bomer would become a great mathematician. Math is related to music. Bomer became a musician instead. He was put ahead two years in school because he was extremely intelligent.

Jan: Did you ever see his band live? Did you like them?

Sharron: I always went to his shows in San Francisco or wherever he played near home. His sister Lori and I danced in the pits at The Whiskey in Los Angeles when RKL played there. That was the only show his father ever attended.

Jan: I read on the internet that Bomer or his friend won the California state lottery? Is that true?

Sharron: Yes, Bomer asked his friend to come to Santa Barbara to join him. Then Bomer prayed. He told me that his friend would win the lottery. A few days later, his friend won sixty-seven million

Bomer, 1988
Homburg, Germany

JENS W.



dollars. Bomers prayers were powerful! He was a magical human. Very spiritual.

Jan: What did they do with the money?

Sharron: He was generous with his part of the money, and though they lived well, the relationship eroded tragically.

Jan: Although I never knew him personally, I will remember a great musician. Thanks for your time, dear Rose! Do you have any greetings to the readers?

Sharron: Bomer loves you all and his last and possibly best music that I found will be released as soon as possible! Bless you all!

Archie Alert, Destiny Booking

How to Divide a Club Crowd into Four Different Fighting Parties and Getting out of This Mess Without Having One Fight

In September 1993, I was supposed to accompany Rich Kids On LSD (RKL) as a tour manager on the Scandinavian tour, which was planned following a four-week break after the first leg of their European tour, in which the band replaced their singer and former drummer Bomer with their original singer, Jason Sears, who flew in for the occasion. I was keen to meet this weird guy again. Our first gig led us to Arhus, where the band transformed the small club into a madhouse like in the old days. Not only on stage, but also before and after the gig, RKL managed to keep the crowd and all people involved moving; a band turned into a powerhouse.

The next day, we had to get up early to catch the car ferry from Denmark to Oslo, where the next gig was to take place. We expected a long, boring eight-hour cruise. While some members of the band were sleeping on benches and seats, Jason followed two old ladies gambling at the poker machines. I watched him for a while and he

"What the hell do you want from me? I'm queer, a gay, an assfucker, a fag What's your problem?"

smiled knowingly when I asked if he planned to rob the two after their gambling session.

A bit later, he moved to one of the machines the old ladies had worked on for over an hour. Jason took over the freshly filled machine, inserted two or three coins and jackpot! With about 10,000 Kronen in his hands, Jason came back and ordered long drinks and food for the crew and provided some of the gang with money for gambling on the different tables. The rest went for additional drinks, which saved the journey, as the band and crew were completely wasted when the ship reached Oslo harbor. The money was gone.

The venue in Oslo was the independent, non-commercial youth centre, Blitz, a very politically correct vegan place, and we were horrified by the idea of dull veggies, rice, tofu and the like. It was soon decided to go for some greasy fast food instead. I advised the guys that marching into the club with big McDonalds bags might lead to misunderstandings with the kitchen crew of the club, but Jason said, "Exactly. This is punk rock," and I shouldn't worry anyway. It soon turned out exactly the way I expected and I was busy calming down the kitchen crew people and keeping them away from the band.

The support band was pretty dull; one of those many Norwegian straightedge hardcore bands and they drew a strong local following, which were stereotypical straightedge kids. The crowd, as a whole, consisted of about one hundred old school punks and crusties, a group of radical lesbians, and a large group of skate kids wearing Lagwagon and NOFX shirts. The owner, a big RKL fan, who also ran a studio in the basement, had the place geared up for recording the gig as a present for himself and the band. The place was finally packed and I watched the main act from the sound board next to our mixer, Adam Schwarz.

The band started to warm up with the crowd dancing and Adam was tightening the sound. Soon, Jason dropped negative comments on the support act and their followers, as well as the whole straightedge attitude as a whole. The crowd began to divide into two opposing

camps: the straightedge kids and the lesbians one the one hand, the old school punks and the skaters on the other. Minor quarrels started. Jason commented on that, in disbelief, and offended the old punks and crusties, who didn't understand Jason's reaction. Everyone became more aggressive as the concert went on.

After Jason puked on a skate kid, dissing NOFX as a RKL clone, he had offended almost the whole crowd, with only some diehard fans still partying. The rest of the audience just hung around looking a bit depressed. Adam and I were laughing about the whole scene, but the guy in the studio stopped the recording and signaled to us via intercom that he was fucked up by the band's attitude. So, the gig came to an early end with no encores. Jason sat down at a table in the bar of the Blitz to relax, but the staff refused to serve the ordered beers. The group of lesbians, which had gathered around him, accused him of sexism. He silenced them with the comment: "What the hell do you want from me? I'm queer, a gay, an assfucker, a fag. What's your problem?" On that reaction, the lesbians left the club musing. I found a friendly staff member to serve us some beers, and the club owner, who initially refused to pay our money, finally gave in and paid after we threatened to start



Jason Sears, 1988

HELGE S.

trouble. We left and stayed with an old friend, Steve from Disorder. So, a long, eventful, and unforgotten day with RKL—and especially Jason Sears—ended. That man, for sure, will go to heaven.

Helge Schreiber, Plastic Bomb Fanzine

An Evening in Bielefeld

I do remember those lads of RKL pretty precisely. How should I forget something which had been so outstandingly impressive for my entire life? Even if it's almost been twenty years since I saw RKL for the last time, I'll never forget RKL. The night I'm talking about had been at the end of the '80s at the AJZ (Autonomous Youth Center) in Bielefeld, where RKL played together with my friends band Unwanted Youth (U.Y.) from Gelsenkirchen. Unwanted Youth had been one of the hottest German hardcore bands, hailing from the "Ruhrpott" (River Ruhr area). The schedule said that U.Y. would be on tour in Europe for

"All I can say is that RKL lived their lives like they played their shows: high speeding on the overtake-lane! And they truly lived their LSD-inebriations. Except that they had never been rich kids."

two weeks along with RKL. That show in Bielefeld happened in the deepest wintertime, where it's been about minus 10 degrees Celsius (17 degrees Fahrenheit). The AJZ had been massively packed, as RKL had been a band where you would say today they have a large, loyal fan base as in 1987, the awesome *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare* LP had been released, which had been a sort of musical revolution within the hardcore scene. Such technically complex, hectic, but super-cool played hardcore hadn't been heard before.

The AJZ filled up pretty good, even though everyone knew that the shows there wouldn't start before 11 PM. Around that time, Unwanted Youth came on stage, preparing themselves for the show. Just when they were ready to start their show, the RKL vocalist Jason also climbed up the stage, yelled a short command like an army drill master, made the U.Y. guys come closer toward him, and had every one of the U.Y. guys show him their tongues. This strange scene disbanded pretty fast, as Jason acted like a teacher and laid one LSD-paper each on their tongues.

Boy, that had been one of the greatest shows of Unwanted Youth ever. I've never before seen them play so well. It was already long after midnight when RKL started playing. RKL's bass player, Joe Raposo, who's a pretty small sized guy, stood in front of about five hundred people and started the show with one of this incomparable bass solos, which made the audience go wild, like a hundred buffalos on a stampede. Within seconds, bodies were flying and it seemed like there was always an enormous human pile on stage, sometimes up to twenty people piled up over each other. "Blocked Out," "Break the Camel's Back," "Think Positive," and many more songs had been played. I had the feeling that I was throwing my mind against the wall!

After about an hour, vocalist Jason had to stop the show by force. We, the mob, had been pogoing and slam dancing so much that we had been sweating like pigs and the humidity had been rising to about 100%. It had been so wet that the water was dripping off the walls and ceiling. Electricity short-circuited. Sparks igniting on stage, and the entire audience got thrown out of the hall for about fifteen minutes. The drop in temperature to 17 degrees Fahrenheit was followed up by a forty-minute "second half" of the show brought another rise of the temperature, which had a great affect on the audience. I remember this show very precisely because of the pneumonia which I—and various other folks who attended this RKL show—got afterwards. This had been one of the very rare moments that I've been proud of an "acquired disease."

I've seen RKL about a dozen times on tour here in Europe. All I can say is that RKL lived their lives like they played their shows:

high speeding on the overtake-lane! And they truly lived their LSD-inebriations. Except that they had never been rich kids.

I think it's no secret anymore that the guys of RKL produced their own LSD and they smuggled their LSD on tour to Europe. They used



RKL, 1988
Homburg, Germany

JENS W.

the large-sized stickers on their guitar and drum bags to hide strips (One hundred papers per strip) of self-produced LSD. And they did spread tons of LSD papers at their shows. Crazy shit!

Interview with Mark Deutrom, Alchemy Records

I Think It's Best for Victor Hayden to Remain Out of Circulation for His Own Health

Jan: Do you remember how RKL came in your life?

Mark: They were a local band in San Francisco and my band, Clown Alley, would play with them sometimes. I also knew Barry socially and would see him around at parties or clubs. I was aware of all the bands in SF that were any good, and RKL was one of the better ones.

Jan: Back in the '80s, you had your label Alchemy Records with tons of interesting bands. You did the first Neurosis record, the *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare* record. Why didn't Alchemy survive even if they had a good roster of bands?

Mark: Like any business that fails, it usually does because of the people involved—or more specifically—the relationships between the people involved. Alchemy was no exception. My partner at the label, Victor Hayden, was essentially an extremely paranoid individual whose paranoia led him to believe that I was trying to steal the company from him. I set up international distribution, produced all the records, managed the label, and never received one penny in profit for my efforts. When I was away on a business trip, I returned to

find that he had gone to every band on the label and offered them a new contract with a new company of which he was the only owner. I decided to not have anything more to do with him at that point, and he agreed to a settlement with me, which has still not been honored twenty years later. I believe he still owes every band that was on the label money, as well as me. He made a lot of people angry.

Jan: *Rock 'n' Roll Nightmare*. How did you like that record back then and today?

Mark: I was happy with it at the time, although there were a lot of technical compromises that affected the result. I honestly can't say I listen to it a whole lot these days.

Jan: Did Epitaph Records give you some money for the re-release of the record?

Mark: I have never received any money for that, and I don't believe I received a producer credit either.

Jan: How did the producing of that album go?

Mark: The studio was a bunch of equipment hooked up in a room, and not really a professional studio. I believe it belonged to a friend of the band in Santa Barbara, California. Bomer had very specific ideas about the recording being as "real" as possible with no reverb or processing of any kind. I found this to be somewhat of a paradox, since virtually everything had to be overdubbed due to the limitations of the studio, and also the band situation. The mics were not very good, so everything sounds a little dull to me. The monitors were inaccurate, and every time you walked in, things sounded completely different due to unregulated power supplies. The band had no bass player, so Bomer recorded all the drum tracks alone first, and then he played all the bass parts over that. Then all the guitar parts and vocals were done individually after that. The result is less organic than I had hoped for, and lacks that great chemistry that they had as a live band. It's a subtle thing, but definitely noticeable to me. Bomer tracking all the drum parts in a row without a scratch track (an unfinished and unedited sound track used to give a rough idea of the sound of the completed recording that most musicians use to record to) is one of the more impressive things I've seen in a studio. He's a good bass player also.

Jan: Would it come out totally different if RKL version 1988 could today record the album with you with all these new techniques?

Mark: I would do it as live as possible to 2" tape and make sure the band had a bass player. I don't think it would be better because of digital technology. That record captured a moment in the history of that band. It's an accurate document. It would have been better if they could have recorded as a unit, or just done a live recording at a show. They were a great live band. There wouldn't have been any cut and paste crap going on with them.

Jan: Was there any point in time where the contact between the band and you was less and less?

Mark: After I left Alchemy in 1987 I had no contact with them or anything else to do with the label.

Jan: How do you remember Jason and Bomer as people?

Mark: Jason and Bomer were great guys: sincere, honest, and genuinely hard working and dedicated to their band. We had a good time making the record, and had a lot of hope for its success. RKL were the kind of band that would do a national tour in a van for 75 dollars a night. They practiced a lot and sounded like they did. The thing that appealed to me about them was that they sounded more like a progressive band that was constantly evolving a personal sound, instead of being influenced by current trends. I thought they had elements of

Rush and Jethro Tull at work in their sound, and that interested me.

Jan: You saw the band several times live. How were they back then?

Mark: They were a very good live band, and were serious about doing what they did as well as they could possibly do it.

Jan: I personally think that the job as a record label owner—it doesn't matter how D.I.Y. it is run—it seems that you are always the asshole. Just seeing at the whole thing in a very superficial way: I mean, about every punk label that exists there are stories about how much they ripped off their bands: SST with their bands, Alternative Tentacles and the Dead Kennedys, Lookout and Screeching Weasel, Touch And Go with Butthole Surfers. Probably Dischord is the only label people say nothing bad about. How do you see that as an (ex-) label owner?

Mark: The label is only as good as the person you deal with personally, and only if that person is willing to take direct responsibility for their own behavior. I have a clear conscious about every band I worked with during those days. I personally did the best job I could do, and being a musician myself, treated everyone how I would want to be treated. Everyone is capable of making mistakes, but hidden agendas are something else. People are responsible for their own actions no matter what they do, and that's where it ends. I don't think people at record labels are any worse than people working in cafés. What kind of person is in front of you? That is all that matters.

Jan: Do you know about the whereabouts of Victor?

Mark: I think it's best for Victor Hayden to remain out of circulation for his own health.

Interview with Doug Moody, Mystic Records

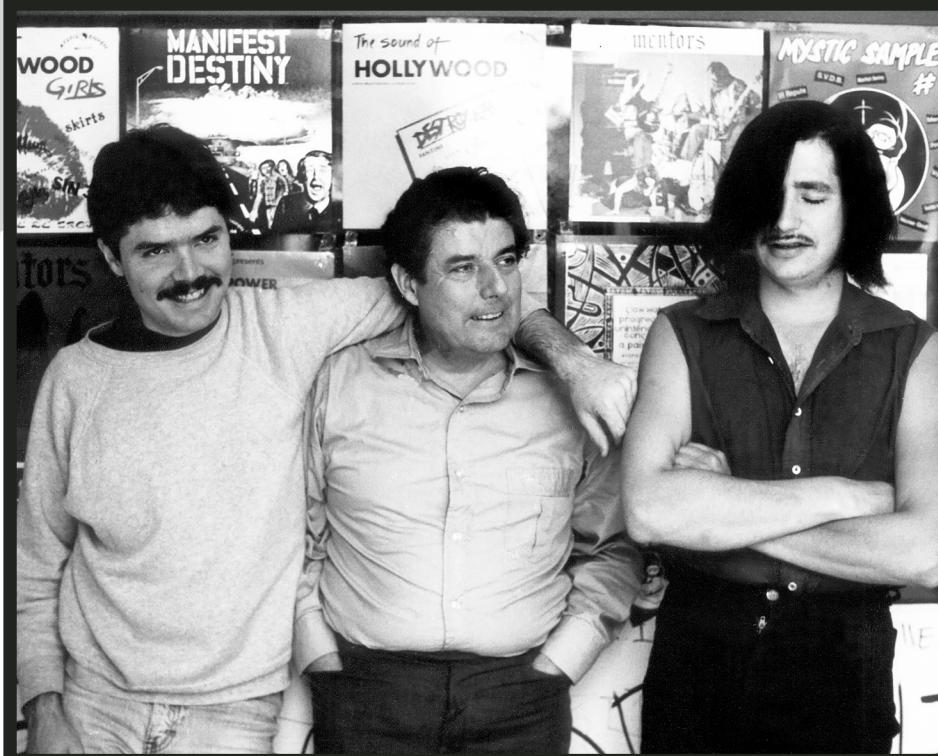
This Is My Totem Pole, My Story, My Wall of Names, Your Freedom

Jan: Do you remember how RKL and Mystic Records got together in the '80s?

Doug: RKL was Bomer. He was the guiding hand and the most upright of the group. The group was brought to Mystic by Hillary Pute, who came along with Ill Repute. Ill Repute was introduced to me while I was on a radio show in Simi Valley where I had recorded Week Er Ten Daze, the Simi Valley band who claim to have drunk so much Coors beer that they paid for Adolph Coors son through college. Anyway, they had stopped touring and their bus was buried under a pile of beer cans. I liked the sound of Ill Repute who called themselves "The Nardcore

Doug Moody and engineers at the old Mystic Studios

COURTESY OF MIKE PUNK VINYL



Sound?": Oxnard Hardcore. I put them into every compilation I put out and made several records with them. Hilary came with them and she introduced me to the various bands including Aggression and RKL.

I personally recorded RKL on their first SuperSeven record (six minutes a side on a 33 RPM 7"). Bomer was outside the studio (Mystic Sound, 6277 Selma in Hollywood) doing skateboard tricks keeping our attention. His group was an hour late for the recording. Suddenly he did a flip and broke his wrist. I thought the session was not going to happen and the engineers went home. I took Bomer upstairs and we taped his wrist with duct tape. While doing this, the group arrived. Bomer pleaded with me to do the session. He said he was good for one take of each song. I was so impressed with this young man. I personally did the session. I taped the drumstick to his hand and we made the 7". He gave me the drumstick and the front skin of his bass drum with RKL on it as a keepsake. I keep these mementoes of a very courageous young man.

Jan: What was your impression of the band? Did you see them live very often?

Doug: Yes, I saw the band live in Nardcoreland and San Francisco. I thought they were a great band with the same views I had after World War II when I became a PUNK. "People UNited Kickass." PUNKs after WWII were called "angry young men." We all read Jean Paul Sartre and vowed to change the world. Still trying. Mystic is my comment wall to the world. It is full of angry young people telling the world how they want to live and how they want their world.

Jan: How did the relationship end? I remember interviewing Jason Sears in Santa Barbara 2004 and he seemed to be very unhappy with the relationship between RKL and Mystic. No payment from Mystic. Was there any conflict?

Doug: It is involved with many people who influenced RKL and, to my opinion, badly. I financed a trip to New York with Dr. Know and RKL. Following the success of Jeff Dahl (Powertrip), we intended to record them live at CBGBs (we did Aggression). Brandon Cruz had abandoned the original Dr. Know group, leaving Kyle to do vocals. The great guitar work was done by Fred Mattaquin of False Confession (another Nardcore band). Dr. Know now did not wish to associate with the then three hundred bands on Mystic, so I started a separate label called Ghetto Way Records and put them in with the "Slimey Valley" groups—Simi Valley—Mystic Land is made up of areas where groups come from.

On the tour, Kyle convinced RKL that they should both leave Mystic and find a label in New York. They did. Both groups went with our distributor, Important Records. For your own distributor to steal groups from you, you know they are lowlifes. RKL also went to Germany and sold the Mystic LP to Dynasty Records for, we understand, an advance of \$15,000. I have never sued any one for stealing from me. I understand that Dynasty was a front for Importand/Pinnacle distributing. RKL could not return to Germany because there was a warrant on them for piracy. This was put out by the German Government, not Mystic Records. I have not changed my opinion of Bomer. He was courageous and he stood up for his misguided friends. I never owed any group royalties on Mystic. They all had a clause of 10% to be paid in merchandise. They all had much more...and I financed the tours. I would have nothing to do with the other members of RKL. They are shitheads. Bomer I respected and he did apologize to me for the guilt of the group.

Jan: Do you still live in California, Oxnard?

Doug: I live in Oceanside, California near San Diego. I was based in

**"Suddenly he did a flip and broke his wrist.
I thought the session was not going to
happen... I taped the drumstick to his
hand and we made the 7"."**



COURTESY OF LIL' JOE

Hollywood. I owned two recording studios: Mystic West was 24 track and Mystic Sound was 16 track. I have been producing since the late '40s and I came to USA in 1950s and did eighteen oldies but goodies groups. In the '60s, pop rock moved to California in the '70s. I started recording punk in the late '70s. One of the rare 7"s is Hey Taxi from 1978. They became Minutemen. I recorded 500 punk skateboard bands. With them I am making a statement of free thinking.

Jan: What kind of memories remain for the individual members of RKL?

Doug: Hard to answer. I did not live with them. They were transient in my life and the only one I would talk to after the problems was Bomer. We had respect for each other's duties and choices and I never spoke badly behind his back. He was too good for that group, in my opinion. Too many people got to that group, profited by it, sucked off them.

Jan: When is the website for Mystic coming with content? It looks very cool, but there is nothing on it.

Doug: The website's had several well-meaning helpers. It has just been taken over by David of Independant Records. I think we will see a website. Ask him. I thank you for allowing me to air some views and some hidden truths about Mystic. I have spent over half a million dollars in six and a half years to build it, over \$80,000 a year for six and a half years. I have not yet got the return income. No matter. This is my totem pole, my story, my wall of names, your freedom.

Interview with Barry D'Alive, RKL's guitar player *Doug Moody Is Like the G. W. Bush of Record Labels*

Jan: When looking back on the excellent RKL DVD you made, are you still satisfied with it? I can imagine it took a lot of work. I like it very much.

Barry: Yeah, it took a lot of work. Looking back, I don't know how or why I did it. Boredom, I guess. I was pissed that the band blew our last chance to make it with a good label and bookers behind us. That was before the computers we have now were available. I've always been the guy who saved everything, for whatever reason. So I logged all the VHS tapes and did the online editing with a friend on an Avid system. He gave me an excellent deal, but it was still expensive. I took a chance that Epitaph would put it out on video tape and pay for it. Brett wasn't so interested but Fat Mike said he'd put it out. Then Scooter at Malt Soda later wanted to put it out—the long version—DVD.

Looking at it now, I'm not satisfied with it. I was annoyed at the band so I took little humorous stabs here and there. Although most of the music portions are rad, it'd be nice to re-edit it without some of the goofy shit. But who has time for everything? I spent a lot of time EQ-ing the music, transferring the footage, scanning art, contacting people

involved, getting the rights to some stuff, editing, harassing stubborn video people who somehow think that their footage of us is their sole property and would rather it never be seen than let us use it, even when I offered some cash but couldn't pay their ridiculous demands.

Jan: Inside the DVD there are some songs by Testicle G And The Feel My Nuts Posse. Was that a hip hop side project from RKL?

Barry: That was just a joke. We had a few days off in Berlin in the middle of a tour. Jason liked to pull his nut sack out and rap tunes while we were just fucking around. We came up with three tunes and Destiny put us in the studio. Archie Alert produced it. I did the samples and guitars. Chris helped us mix it. We would play the "Feel My Nut" song when someone broke a string on stage.

Jan: There is like a minute at the end of the DVD with Jason puking. Was that a trademark of the new RKL?

Barry: I guess Jason always had the ability to puke at will. It wasn't until later that he did it on stage. He would puke on Lil' Joe all the time. I thought it was hilarious. He puked on stage in San Jose where a girl we know was stripping and she was topless, falling down it. She thought it was beer. I told her otherwise.

Jan: The Band broke up after *Riches to Rags* and reformed at the end of the '90s. I saw RKL live in California in 2004 but you did not play with them anymore. Was there a conflict or why did Chris Flipping play for you?

Barry: I, as well as others around us, saw no reason to do RKL again. I didn't care if they did. Besides the fact I wasn't getting along with Jason very well, I assume they knew I wasn't interested. Tired of all the drama. And, oh boy, did the drama continue. It's hard to watch someone slowly kill themselves. And it finally happened. Very sad.

Jan: How was a RKL concert in 1988 and how was it in 1996?

Barry: 1988 was probably the most energetic, wild, crazy, bad ass era of the band; when we found Lil' Joe and gigged a lot. Bomer was one of the greatest drummers around. In 1996, we were older, fatter, lost Bomer, and didn't care as much. I think *Riches to Rags* is a great record and I'm glad we showed we still had it when some people thought we were done. Jason wanted to call that record *All Washed up But Still Stinking*.

Jan: How did you get in contact with Malt Soda back then?

Barry: I needed cash to pay the bills and take care of my six-month-old son. So I sold a bunch of old shit I had kicking around on Ebay, including RKL shit. Scooter bought some T-shirts. Then we became friends and, when I can, I've helped him with his label.

Jan: I read your memorial article on Jason and Bomer where you wrote that Bomer won the lottery for \$75 million. Is that true?

Barry: It was Bomer's lover who won the lottery. I think it was \$85 million. From what I understand, he bought Bomer a beautiful house, grand piano, Protools system and gave him \$10,000 a month. Nice living those last few years.

Jan: How should people remember RKL?

Barry: Besides or including the obvious drug references, I think the band was overall a positive influence on many.

Jan: How do you remember the band: Jason, Derrick, Bomer?

Barry: I barely remember the band, but Jason, Derrick and Bomer were talented, tortured souls.

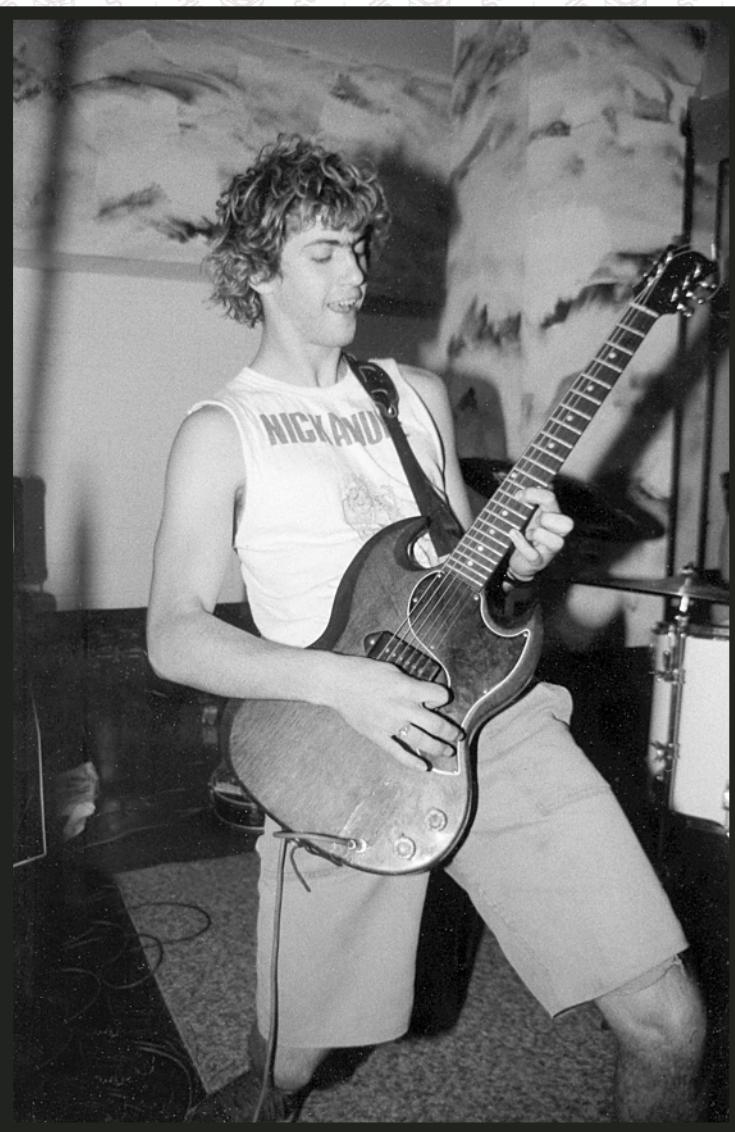
Jan: Any good joke you know and wanna tell us?

"I guess Jason always had the ability to puke at will."

Barry: RKL...Kidding.

Jan: Barry, I think it's fair to get some point of views from RKL across, concerning the relationship with RKL and Mystic Records. You played with RKL in the '80s. Did you join the band when they were still on Mystic?

Barry: Yes, I joined the band right after they did the *Beautiful Feeling* EP and went to Mystic during the mixes. I had the prank call and Mr. Spock samples



RKL, 1988
Homburg, Germany

JENS W.

that got included. Then they moved back to Santa Barbara and I stayed in San Francisco until they came back after *Keep Laughing* was recorded.

Jan: Even in far away Germany, we know about the bad reputation of the label: not paying their bands, the conflict Youth Brigade had with Mystic in the early '80s, the joke calling Mystic "Mystake." Then again, I read an interview with Mystic in an old *Flipside* from like 1984 where he claimed nearly the same as now in the interview I did with him: no bands were ripped off, no contract violations, bands were paid with merchandise. What do you say about some points Doug Moody said?

Barry: I think Doug Moody is like the G. W. Bush of record labels: so completely full of shit he starts to believe his own lies. We were gigging a lot when I joined the band and there sure wasn't any merch to sell. I think he's talking about a pitiful amount of merchandise from the RKL/Dr. Know tour in '85. Besides that, they gave us zero, zilch, nothing at all! A lot of promises. And the Mystic Records sold a lot, or so my friends that worked at distributors at the time told me. It's not really my fight since I wasn't on those recordings, but I starved on the road with the band too, helping to promote those records.

We went on tour "Disastour" '86 and had no Mystic merchandise at all. Mystic gave us a lot of empty promises, we wasted money on phone calls to them, and they never sent us any merchandise on the road. We bootlegged our own tapes and screened our own shirts.

We were fucking broke, starving, dumpster diving for food, barely making gas money, and we kept going because that's what we did. Doug Moody can say he financed the tours and paid us in merch but that's completely untrue.

I was bugging Chris for years to sue them but it hasn't happened. Now all the Mystic stuff is on Itunes. Now's their chance to pay up for twenty-five years of "merchandise" RKL was supposed to receive. I'm sure Chris and Vince could sell it. I also don't know why Doug Moody is all high and mighty, saying he's paying the bands in merchandise. Seems like a pretty bum deal to me. What's wrong with sending statements and being level with the bands? Doug Moody isn't Satan incarnate; he's just an old man who made a living ripping off naive young, green talented punks who just wanted to make a record.

I'm so sick of musicians always getting ripped off that I have a little fight left, even when it's not my fight. Let me explain further:

1. Doug said we went to Germany and sold the Mystic LP to Dynasty Records for \$15,000. It was Destiny records not "Dynasty" what a laugh and they knew we didn't get paid shit for any of the Mystic records so we decided to bootleg it, not just because we didn't get paid but because it wasn't available in Europe. We didn't get a \$15,000 advance either. I think we got maybe \$2,000 or something like that before Mystic threatened to put a cease and desist and the distributor didn't want a lawsuit.

2. Moody never sued anyone for stealing from him because he couldn't. He stole from everyone else. We were just too broke to get a good lawyer.

3. Destiny (Dynasty) was not a front for their distributors. What a joke. It was a label and booker. Still is.

4. RKL was not prevented to go to Germany because of a warrant for piracy. What a laugh. Like the German government even gives a shit.

5. Regarding, "Bomer stood up for his misguided friends." Bomer was a creative genius but horrible at business decisions, like signing to Mystic. His "misguided friends" were us, wondering why we didn't get a dime from those records that were selling great and we were broke. Valid issue, I believe.

6. And his last quote: "I never owed any group royalties on Mystic. They all had a clause of 10 percent to be paid in merchandise. They all had much more and I financed the tours." I forget, but perhaps the not owing royalties was due to all the young bands signing a really, really bad contract. Getting paid 10 percent in merchandise is a pretty bad deal. But I remember that he never even did that. To this day! Years later, with all the Mystic shit on Itunes where is this merchandise? A measly 10 percent of years of royalties in merchandise? Give me a break. He never financed our tours.

Ultimately, it was the frustration with deals like that and Alchemy later that broke up the band the first time. Had our business sense been there in the beginning and things gone right, I think Bomer wouldn't have wanted to bag it back in '89. I really don't care anymore. But we got burned so many times I can't let a thieving old lop like Doug Moody tell lies and call us—the ones who kept the ball rolling for so many years—Bomer's "misguided friends" just because we spoke up about getting ripped off. To end it, and reiterate what we've always said in person or in print: Don't buy Mystic! On Itunes or not. Download it for free from BitTorrent. Or I'll burn it for you. And here's another great Bomer quote: "Mystic Records can peel back the foreskin and eat the cheese after they suck the corn out of my shit."

Hey, it's punk rock. Who gives a fuck?

Interview with Joe Raposo (Lil' Joe)

RKL's Bass Player

I Remember Hearing Them for the First Time When I Was Fifteen. Two Years Later, I Was in the Band.

Jan: What are you doing these days?

Joe: These days I'm keeping myself busy with music and work. I'm currently in several bands and projects. I'm still playing, recording, and touring with The Real McKenzies. We toured Europe earlier this year, did a Fat tour in Canada with the Mad Caddies and Saint Catherines, and also did the last leg of the Warped Tour on the West Coast of the U.S. As far as work goes, I am currently working at Electronic Arts. I am testing online video games for their website. Also, I'm getting a lot of art done, too. It's really cool, because I never had enough time to devote to that, due to music. In '07, I drew Lagwagon's T-

shirt design for their last tour and I'm almost done with my first oil painting.

Jan: Do you still play for the Real McKenzies?

Joe: I heard about the McKenzies was by Sean Sellers (Good Riddance). I had seen him at one of our friend's wedding and he told me that they were looking for a bass player. I was interested, but didn't give it much thought. Then I got a call one day at work and Bone asked me if I was interested in recording a couple of tracks for the McKenzies. When I went down to the studio and hung out with those guys. It was such a great time and we had a blast! I've been in the band ever since.

Jan: Do you remember the RKL tours to Europe and Germany?

Joe: I remember the early tours. 1988 and 1989 were the earliest ones. RKL was also there in 1993 and 1996. The first time we went to Europe, my mom and dad signed full guardianship to our guitar player Barry D'Live. We had the note signed by everyone and notarized by a notary public. I was seventeen years old at the time and wasn't considered an adult (by U.S.A. standards). My parents weren't going to let me go, but I talked to my high school principal. He talked to them and convinced them to let me go. Pretty funny, because my "guardian" got me wasted every night and shoved L.S.D. down my throat! But, in reality, I didn't put up much of a fight at all! Those were great times. It was a time when European doors were opening up to great American hardcore bands. I think that RKL was definitely one of the pioneers of bringing Europe closer to American hardcore punk, especially California hardcore. Those were the days.

Jan: A lot of people, including myself, think that you are one of the greatest bass players around. I am also a big fan of Phil Rudd of AD/DC. What were your influences when you started playing? Have you any kind of bass "heroes"? I recently interviewed Kira Roessler. I also like her style.

Joe: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that. I love Black Flag and Kira Roessler is a great bass player. I also like Phil Rudd. He is definitely one of the most underrated bass players in rock history. So is Michael Anthony of Van Halen. As far as influences go, I think my earliest influences were John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin), Geddy Lee (Rush), and Geezer Butler (Black Sabbath). I was definitely a little rocker growing up. Then when I got older, I started listening to different styles of music and was really influenced by Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Simon Gallup from The Cure, Jaco Pastorius, Bootsy Collins, Stanley Clarke, Tony Levin, and Jeff Berlin. As far as punk bass players are concerned, my greatest influence was Rob Wright from Nomeansno. And last but not least, Bomer. He taught me so much about playing bass. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be the player I am today.

Jan: I saw RKL one time in Santa Barbara in 2004 and also interviewed Jason then. That was a cool concert and Jason seemed in good shape. I did not quite understand the circumstances of his death. He was in a drug rehab clinic in Tijuana and died there?

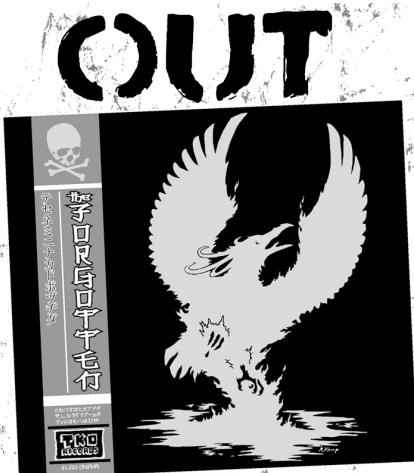
Joe: Well, even though Jason "seemed" like he was in good shape, he wasn't. Drug addiction was deteriorating his body and he was suffering both physically and psychologically. He always had a talent

"I think that the rap tries to teach you how to cope with life... So if it doesn't make sense to you, then you understand it!"

for disguising the way he felt and you would never know how he was feeling because he was always funny and would make you laugh no matter what was going on. He died in a Tijuana, Mexico medical clinic where he was being treated with ibogaine. Ibogaine is a drug derived from a West African plant that can help overcome addiction and withdrawal from hard drugs. He died from a brain aneurism that occurred when a piece of bone got caught in his blood stream from the administration of the ibogaine. Sad story. Totally sucks.

Jan: What comes directly to your mind when you think of Jason and Bomer?

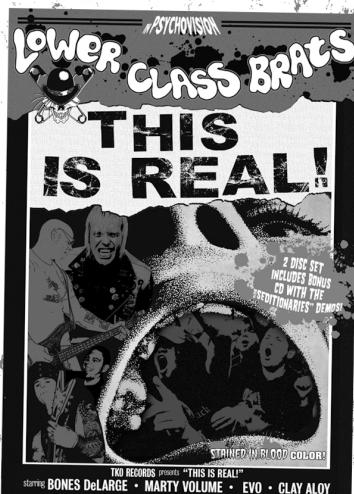
Joe: The first thing that comes to my head is: "what a waste of life." Sadness also comes to my head. But when I'm done thinking about all the loss and sadness, I think about all the good times we had, what



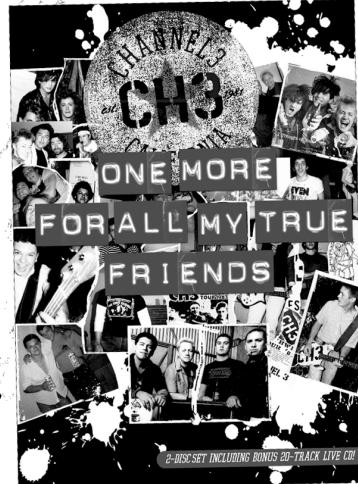
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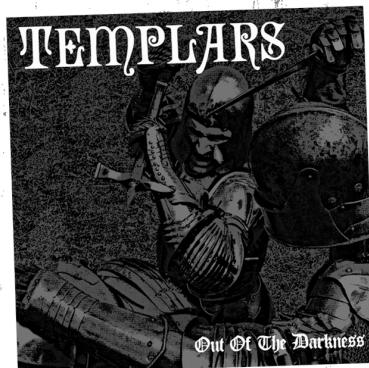
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great people they both were, and how much fun we had together.

Jan: How old were you when RKL started?

Joe: I was thirteen when RKL started. I remember hearing them for the first time when I was fifteen. I had bought the Nardcore compilation and first heard RKL on that record. Then I went out and bought *Keep Laughing*. Two years later, I was in the band. [laughs] Crazy!

Jan: What songs do you like from RKL and are there some you hate?

Joe: There is one song that got on my nerves a little. It's "Pothead." I do like the song, but playing it every night was a drag. It was a song that we had to play because everyone loved it! It's funny how that works.

Jan: Hey, I never understood the rap part of "Find a Way," even when I got the lyrics.

Joe: I think that the rap tries to teach you how to cope with life. Then it goes into a situation that happens at Taco Bell and after that. It's just a bunch of nonsense. So if it doesn't make sense to you, then you understand it!

Jan: Were RKL concerts different in USA and in Europe?

Joe: Yes, very different. There were a few places in the U.S. where we did great, like Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Seattle, West Coast shows and throughout the States here and there. But in Europe, we did well almost everywhere. European fans really appreciated us a little more than our U.S. fans. That made the shows a lot more fun and a lot better because the energy and enthusiasm was there every night.

Jan: RKL influenced a lot of bands. The whole melodiccore thing with Lagwagon and NOFX would never have happened without RKL, but it seems that RKL remains kind of unknown to the youth of today and people only know the influenced bands and not the original. Why is that?

Joe: I think the reason why the kids don't know of RKL is because we didn't tour as much as the other bands and we always made the wrong career decisions. It's putting yourself out there that makes people notice. We just couldn't keep it together to consistently tour and put out records. Eventually, you get mowed over by other bands, regardless if they are heavily influenced by you or not. If they are playing your sound, and you're not there to show the kids that you did it first, then they will never know. And another thing is that the kids don't really want to dig deep enough to find the origin of the music that they're listening to. Not all of them, but most of them. The ones that do know, really appreciate it, and that's what counts. At one time, I was very bitter towards bands who were making a living off of the style of music that we played and helped pioneer, but as I grew up, I took it as more of a compliment.

Jan: Looking back, would you change something concerning RKL?

Joe: If I could change one thing, I would have never let RKL break up the first time in 1989. I would have fought that to the death and would have never let it happen.

Jan: I always loved RKL because of the music, but also because of the lyrics. Did Jason write all the song lyrics?

Joe: In the beginning, before I was in the band, it was a group effort, but mostly Bomer and Jason writing the lyrics. Same thing with *Rock'n'Roll Nightmare*. Then on *Riches to Rags*, it was Jason writing the lyrics with a little help from us.

Jan: Are you still in contact with the old band members like Chris Rest and Dave Raun?

Joe: I talk to Chris everyday and see him all the time. I see Dave from time to time and we call each other occasionally to talk and catch up on what's going on. I always try to see Lagwagon when they play. Last year, the McKenzies played with them. That was fun. I still talk to Barry as well. His band The Crosstops toured with the McKenzies just recently. I love those guys. I'll know them for the rest of my life.

Jan: How should people remember the band?

Joe: They should remember the band as a bunch of fucked-up losers who played some pretty good music.

Jan: Was Bomer the driving force behind RKL in the early days?

Joe: Well, Bomer was always the driving force of anything, even a conversation. You couldn't be in a room without him dominating something or another. So that aspect of him really pushed the band. But it was everybody who helped. Everyone did their part to make the band work.

Jan: Do you know if *Riches to Rags* sold well? I like very much that album.

Joe: I don't know the exact numbers, but I think it was around 60,000 copies or so. I'm proud of that album. It's been a long time since I listened to it. I remember listening to it a couple of years ago and

it was a blast to hear those songs again. It's a shame that Epitaph stopped making that album. Now it's really hard to find. I don't even have a copy of it myself. X gave them all away. Even *Greatest Hits*, I don't even have a copy of that either.

Jan: What made you laugh in recent times? What made you sad?

Joe: At our last King City show, Chris Rest thought it would be funny to kick his Martin acoustic across the pavement and he ended up kicking a huge hole in the side of his guitar! We were all drunk and laughed. But then when we sobered up and looked at the damage, we were pretty sad.

Jan: Were drugs a heavy part of RKL in the past?

Joe: Yes, drugs were a heavy part of RKL. I mean, you can't be in a band called Rich Kids On LSD without living up to the name a little bit. In Jason and Bomer's case, the drug use got out of hand. When you start messing around with heroin, then it's a different story. The rest of us didn't go that route. And thank god we didn't. If we did, then there would have been more deaths. Right now, we are all casual drug users. No one has a problem with anything and we all know how to handle our partying. We are, of course, seasoned professionals!

Jan: Is any version of RKL going to happen?

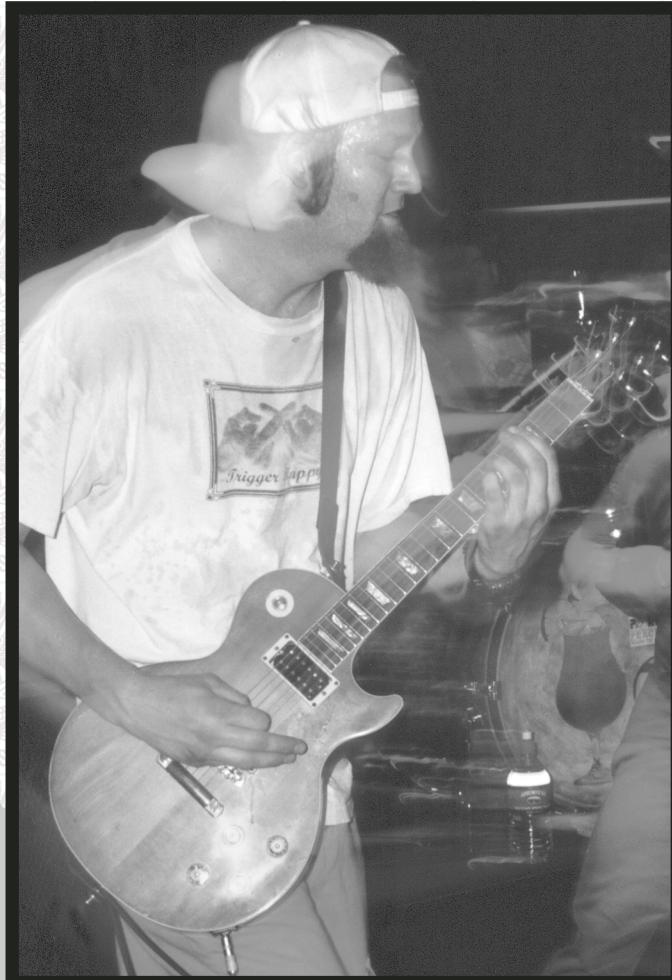
Joe: Personally, I would like RKL to rest in peace. I don't think doing a reunion or a tribute is a good idea. If other people do it, that's fine, but if any of the existing members do it, it would not be the same. So don't do it at all. That's what I think.

Jan: Do you have any greetings to the readers?

Joe: Have a drink for our dear departed friends and musicians Jason, Bomer, and Derek.

Chris Flippin, 1988

TODD TAYLOR



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Adrian Salas

Worst CD Purchases I've Made So Far in Life

- 5. Mile Davis, *Kind of Blue*. More like *Kind of Boring*.
- 4. D. Boon, *D. Boon and Friends*. I love the Minutemen and consider D. Boon a personal hero, but this stuff is painfully bad in multiple ways.
- 3. KISS, *Greatest Hits*. "Detroit Rock City"? Good song. Most other KISS stuff? Not so much.
- 2. Rancid Vat, *Rancid Vat Vs. the Rest of the World*. Like a bad GG Allin cover band, but no poop to make it entertaining.
- 1. Steely Dan, *Aja*. The day I learned to never trust *Rolling Stone* again.

Amy Adoyzie

Dream a Little Dream in Bangladesh
(Things I Never Thought Would Happen, But Did)

- Drank "local whiskey" (and it tasted like burning.)
- Went to a show (called Rock'a Mania, where bands riled everyone up with Creed and Metallica covers.)
- Got hit on (by a Pakistani medical student who tried by pick me up by talking about the film *Titanic*.)
- Wore a bikini (at a guesthouse during women-only swim hour within twelve-feet-high walls.)
- Pay \$17 USD for a six pack of Heineken (see above.)

Art Ettinger

- The Bananas, *New Animals* LP
- Icon Gallery, Self-titled 7"
- Indecent Exposure, *Live in Hildesheim, Germany* 2008 CD
- The Test Patterns, *Flower of Mind* 7"
- Various Artists, *Oi! Don't Pay the Bills!* CD

Ben Snakepit

Top Five U.K. Bands

1. The Shitty Limits
2. Flamingo 50
3. One Night Stand In North Dakota
4. Cold Ones
5. Offshore Radio

Chris Peigler

1. *Enter Naomi: SST, L.A., And All That* by Joe Carducci (Can't-put-it-down book about deceased SST photographer Naomi Petersen and the early days of the record label.)
2. Obstruction, self-titled 7" EP
3. You, Me, And Us, *Beercan Rebellion* CD
4. To What End?/Witch Hunt split 7"
5. The Duel, *Let's Finish What We Started* CD

Chris Pepus

- The International Longshore and Warehouse Union's one-day strike against the war in Iraq
- Scott Skelton and Jim Benson: *Rod Serling's Night Gallery: An After-hours Tour* (book)
- Sandra Milo (actress)
- The St. Louis Art Museum's series of films by Roberto Rossellini
- J. Peter Scoblic: *U.S. vs. Them* (book)

Corinne

Top Five "Named" Houses That Produce Good Stories

1. Fast Castle (San Diego)
2. Alamo House (Minneapolis)
3. Whiskey House (Gainesville)
4. Future House (Gainesville)
5. Bender Haus (Escondido)

CT Terry

1. Moving to Chicago 7/1.
2. *The End of the Jews* by Adam Mansbach (book)
3. Drive-By Truckers, *Southern Rock Opera*
4. Outkast, *ATLiens*
5. My last few runs in Prospect Park.

Daryl Gussin

- Code Of Honor, *What Are We Gonna Do?* 7"
- The Brokedowns, *Six Songs* CD
- The Estranged, *Static Thoughts* LP, both 7"s, and live
- Marked Men, The Arrivals, Young Offenders, Airfix Kits at the Knockout, SF, CA
- Dark Ages, *Four Songs* 7" tie with Deep Sleep, *Manic Euphoria* 7"

Dave Williams

Top 5 Recently Acquired Gems!

1. Cro-Mags, *Age of Quarrel* LP, 1986.
2. Rico, *Man from Wareika* LP, 1976.
3. Fifteen, *Choice of a New Generation* LP, 1993.
4. The Specials, *Gangsters* 7", 1979.
5. Twisted Roots, *Mommy's Always Busy...* 7", 1981.

Denise Orton

Five Best Things about Gainesville, FL

1. The Fest
2. Constant influx of new people/friends/ musicians (courtesy of UF students and drop-outs)
3. There's a show somewhere every night (see gainesvillebands.com)
4. No judgment for drinking at noon (hence Common Grounds Liquid Lunch)
5. No matter how many times you leave, never to return, it always welcomes you back with open arms. (Goodbye again, Gainesville!)

Designated Dale

Top 5 So. Cal. Summer Gig/ Touring Highlights

1. Big Drill Car: First time the original line-up has rocked it together in sixteen years! Yes Virginia, there are snowballs in hell. Fuck, yes!
2. Motörhead: Continuing to kill it live, LP after great LP, not to mention that Lemmy turns sixty-three this December. What are you going to do when you retire?
3. Throw Rag: Because some bands still believe that real rock'n'roll matters.
4. Off With Their Heads: Craigslist shenanigans aside, these characters seriously bring the rock like it's no one's business.

5. Riverboat Gamblers: A top shelf band with this much power that covers the Ramones' "Slug" has got nothing but my respect, the same way the almighty Candy Snatchers did "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend."

Donofthedead

- Tragedy/Blowback, Live
- Population Reduction, *Each Birth a New Disaster* LP
- Eye For An Eye, *Gra* LP
- World Burns To Death, *The Graveyard of Utopia* CD
- Kalashnikov, *Dreams for Super-Defeated-Heroes* CD

Gabe Rock

Top 5 Things on My Mind at This Very Moment

1. Summer in Portland, OR. You, me, the Sandy River, a twelve pack of Hamm's and the beautiful old growth Doug Fir pine trees that reach into your heart and regally fuck you like an eagle, eagle fucker.
2. The Great Dictator, Charlie Chaplin.

3. Obama '08, hope and optimism in politics for the first time since the Seattle WTO riots 1999, Nader 2000, or Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D, Ohio), introducing thirty-five articles of impeachment to the senate in June 2008.
4. Terri Gross's ability to make anything fascinating.
5. Chinese Telephones, Potential Johns, Dear Landlord, Dillinger Four, and Cranford Nix. Music you need since that rock you have been living under has shielded you from the joy of music, friendship, and making a complete ass of yourself when you dance.

Jennifer Whiteford

- Michel Rabagliati, *Paul Has a Summer Job* (graphic novel)
- Lavinia Greenlaw, *The Importance of Music to Girls* (memoir)
- Reverend Nør's Razorcake Podcast
- Immaculate Machine, *Fables* CD
- Lost Locker Combo, *Freshman Orientation* CD

Drank "local whiskey" (and it tasted like burning.)

Jimmy Alvarado

Five Swell Things about the Vexing Female Voices of East L.A. Punk Exhibit Opening at the Claremont Museum of Art

- My home scene finally gets some long overdue proper!
- Alice Bag performing live: From the punked up cover of Cucu Sanchez' "No Soy Monedita de Oro" to the warp-speed versions of "Gluttony" and "We Don't Need the English," she left little doubt why she's considered one of punk rock's true greats.
- Jake Smith and Pat Perez: Working with them on our video contribution to the exhibition was an honor and hopefully the kids in The Brat were happy with the result of our efforts.
- Seein' friends old and new: Now Karla will know who I'm talking about when I go on (yet again) about the "old days."
- The resulting controversy over the exhibit: Nice to know all the chronic elitism, cliquishness, and general stupidity that marred both sides of the greater L.A. scene are alive, well, and still as funny as a Mel Brooks flick. Keep flappin' yer arms and howlin', ya fuggin' ninnies.

Joe Evans III:

- The Bananas, *New Animals* CD + Live.
- The Sass Dragons, *Bonkaroo!* CD
- Hunchback, *Pray for Scars* LP
- Prizzy Prizzy Please, Live.
- Patton Oswalt, *Frankensteins and Gumdrops* CDEP

Josh Benke

- Nobunny, live at the Underground... to a crowd of four and still absolutely killed it!
- Nobunny, *Love Visions*, LP
- Blank Its, *Windows Are Dirty* 7"
- The Yolks, Self-titled 7"
- Mayyors, *Marines Dot Com* 7"—still, and waiting with highest possible anticipation for the new one.

Keith Rosson

- Shotwell, *Patriot* CD
- Latterman, *We Are Still Alive* LP
- Dirty Money, *Far From Home...* CDEP
- North Lincoln/The Gibbons split 7"
- Moving into a new apartment

that, in its sullied and glorious history, had previous tenants that included fans of group sex (in my bedroom! Sexual juju abounds!) and a really crappy MRR columnist from the early aughts.

Maddy Tight Pants

- Kung-Fu Monkeys, *Christmas for Breakfast* CD
- The Tammys, "Egyptian Shumba" (song)
- *Misquoting Jesus* by Bart Ehrman (book)
- *Epileptic* by David Beauchard (amazing graphic novel!)
- Summer!

Megan Pants

- Leatherface: live four times in one week
- Audio Visual Murder (yes, terrible name), live with The Pets at the Lucky Gator Loft
- Chaos in Tejas
- Sass Dragons, *Bonkaroo!*
- Bananas, *New Animals* and live in Milwaukee

Mike Faloon

My Five Favorite Songs from the New Bananas' Record, *New Animals*
1. "New Animals"
2. "Peanut Butter Cups"
3. "Jus' Folks"
4. "Radio Action"
5. "Tick Tock"

Mike Frame

- 1. Lemuria, *Get Better* LP and live
- 2. Pat Todd & Rank Outsiders, *Trouble's Hand* CD
- 3. Testament, *Formation of Damnation* CD
- 4. Drive By Truckers LP reissues
- 5. Chris Knight, entire catalog

Miss Namella

Top Five Songs with the Word "Summer" in the Title
1. "Dirty Black Summer" by Danzig
2. "Summertime Blues" by Eddie Cochran or Blue Cheer or Joan Jett
3. "Summertime Rolls" by Jane's Addiction
4. "Wait Til the Summer Comes Along" by The Kinks
5. "Indian Summer" by Beat Happening

MP Johnson

- Dennis Wilson, *Pacific Ocean Blue* CD reissue
- H2O, *Nothing to Prove* CD
- Tony Jaa in *The Protector*, particularly the longer, international cut on the DVD
- Zappa Plays Zappa at First Avenue in Minneapolis
- Michale Graves acoustic shows at the Red Raven and the Nestor in Fargo

Naked Rob (KSCU 103.3FM)

- 1. Sirhan Sirhan, *Blood* (violent noise rock) CD
- 2. Black Earth, *That's Right, Were Going Ballz Deep* (Texas Rock'n'roll) CD
- 3. Federale, *Federale* (Brooklyn ROCKS!) CD
- 4. Racebannon, *Acid or Blood* (noise-core) CD
- 5. The Restarts *Outsider* (U.K. Punk) CD

Nation Of Amanda

- Top Five Bands in Comic Books
- 1. Ape Sex (*Love and Rockets*)
- 2. Josie and the Pussycats (duh)
- 3. Leonard and the Love Gods (*Hate*)
- 4. Dusted Bunnies (*Hopeless Savages*)
- 5. Billy and the Boingers (*Bloom County*)

Newtim's

- Current and Complete Obsession with Early '80s Power Pop
- 5. Megahertz, "Tu"
- 4. The Shivvers, "Teenline"
- 3. Any Trouble, "Yesterday's Love"
- 2. The Jags, "Back of My Hand"
- 1. Protex, "Don't Ring Me Up"

Nick Toerner

- Cheeky, *Choke on a Cheeseburger* EP
- The Hold Steady, *Stay Positive* CD
- Team Stray, *Three Songs About Girls and One About Trevor* 7"
- Closet Fairies, *Ghetto Girls* 7"
- The Jetty Boys, Self-titled CD

Rev. Nørk

- 1. Black & Whites, Self-titled 12"
- 2. Rich White Males/Cummies, International Losers, split CD
- 3. Beat Beat, *Without You* 7"
- 4. Nobunny, *Love Visions* LP
- 5. Replacements, various bonus tracks, CD reissues

Ryan Leach

- Kraftwerk, *The Man Machine* LP
- Wire, *154* LP
- Rena Kosnett's photo show, July 12
- Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism
- Wounded Lion—new 45 on the way

Rhythm Chicken

- Holy Shit!, LP
- Seu Jorge, *The Life Aquatic Sessions*
- Slayer, *God Hates Us All*
- Holy Shit! live in Green Bay
- beer

Sean Koepenick

- New Records I Am Excited to Hear This Summer
- 1. Street Dogs
- 2. The Rifles
- 3. Shot Baker
- 4. Boston Spaceships
- 5. Rambling Shadows

Steveo

- 1. Cheap Time, self-titled LP
- 2. Spoon, I celebrate their entire catalog
- 3. Screeching Weasel, *Boogada* LP (Why didn't anyone tell me this band was good?)
- 4. *The Incredible Hulk* (See, now how hard was it to make a decent Hulk movie? Ang Lee, take some fucking notes.)
- 5. Gary Busey on *Celebrity Rehab*. It hasn't aired yet but I guarantee this will be one of my favorite things ever.

Todd Taylor

- Bananas, *New Animals* CD
- Sass Dragons, *Bonkaroo!* CD
- Estranged, *Static Thoughts* LP
- Hidden Spots, *Secret Noise* 7"EP
- Something's Wrong / Shorebirds split 7"
- Brokedowns, *Six Songs* CDEP

Ty Stranglehold

- Top Five "C" Bands
- 1. Cramps
- 2. Circle Jerks
- 3. Clash
- 4. Crowd
- 5. China Creeps

Vincent Battilana

- Asian Man Records: *Making Punk Fun Again* tour at Safari Sam's
- Vivian Girls, *Wild Eyes* 7"
- Browntrout / Gleam Garden split 7"
- The Singulairs, *Pet Sounds (for Alexia)* 2 x 7"
- Tie: Samiam, *Billy* CD and Samiam, *Soar* CD

Will Kwiatkowski

- 1. *Fully Flared* (skate video)
- 2. *Scam #6* (zine)
- 3. Summer
- 4. *Mystery Science Theater 3000* episodes on Google Video
- 5. Having the last word in Top Fives...

26 BEERS: Self-titled: CD

When I imagine great crusty hardcore punk in my head, it usually ends up sounding something like 26 Beers. It's fast and hard but not overdone, with driving drums and definite riffage. Vocal misfires often turn crusty bands unlistenable, but the opposite is true here; the gruff-and-glassy vocal attack is perfect, and fits the music like a puzzle piece. This is phenomenal. —Will Kwiatkowski (Rodent Popsicle)

86 MENTALITY: *Final Exit* CD

More on the oi side of things than hardcore these days, but it sounds good either way. I like the bellowing vocal style, which gives this that edge needed to be convincing. The songs cruise at a mid-tempo pace and the guitar has that blazing sound that has a slow-burning effect. Songs like "Degenerate" and "Out Of Control" are the definite standouts, requiring repeated listens before moving on to the next track. There's also a live seven-song set tacked on at the end of this. —M.Avg (Deranged)

AIRFIX KITS: Demo: CD-R

I never got to see Giant Haystacks, but I saw Airfix Kits' first show at the Knockout in San Francisco and it's obvious that these two guys have this music so ingrained in their lives that there's no end in sight. Allan and Alan have the ability to constrict themselves around a song, taking their time and methodically squeezing the vibrant, flavorful juices out of it until you're soaking head to toe in something you're not sure you really understand other than the fact that it's fucking good. Early Wire meets Minutemen but played by three guys who know how to make something their own. I can't wait for more from this band. —Daryl (Self-released, www.myspace.com/airfixkits)

ANGRY 4 LIFE: *Some Songs We Recorded 2004-2006*: CD

I'm gonna give this CD the thumbs up. It has that speedy and melodic skate punk feel that I like. Just like their name, these guys also have a lot of lyrics about being angry at life, which is fine by me (although these guys really seem too hung up on drinking away their pain, as they mention it in around five of the songs). When I was looking these guys up, I also learned a new genre of punk which I never heard of, which is trall punk. I guess you discover something new everyday. The stand out track to me is "The Sky Is Falling." There's a catchy violin line in that song that just really throws it over the top for me. The rest of the album is good, but I wish more of it was more memorable and would stick with me as much as that one song.

RAZORCAKE RECORD REVIEW GUIDELINES AND FAQS

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RECORD REVIEWS



"The ultimate fall back album for those diagnosed with manic depression."

—Daryl

Pretty Boy Thorson And The F'n A's, *Take It Easy*

—Adrian (Co-release: Hungry Ghosts, Infected, Jerk Off, Lokos, Tic Tac Totally, Vinehell, White Trash Taco)

ANNIHILATION TIME: *III: Tales of the Ancient Age*: LP

Annihilation Time have evolved from a rather predictable, straight-up Black Flag/Bl'ast clone into a ripping amalgam of that early sound, *Rock N Roll Nightmare*-era RKL and a drug-addled Phil Lynott's finest moments. This is yet another step forward in the progression heard on both the II LP and the *Cosmic Unconsciousness 7"*, and the band's new home on smoke-enveloped Tee Pee Records seems an exquisitely perfect fit. This should delight clean cut hardcore kids, dirty old skids, crossover metal nerds, and everyone in between. Bonkers. —Dave Williams (Tee Pee)

ANTEENAGERS M.C.: Self-titled: 7"EP
Philosophically playful and a little more abstract than their previous *Let's Not Have a Party 7"* (which ruled), it seems like these French folk are testing the form, both topically ("Mao Vs. the Sparrows") and structurally ("Illusions of the Teens") has a lot of counting numbers between thirteen and nineteen, so it's feels like a musical Derrida meets *Sesame Street*. My favorite track is the "regressive" (meaning the one track that most reminds me of their previous work)

"Let's Get Back Together," which fuses the sunshine and doom of the best of the Velvet Underground into a timepiece of music that sounds simultaneously like a new anthem and a song that has been already been played for forty years. (It's a cover, I later find out.) Great stuff. —Todd (Plastic Idol, www.plasticidol.com)

ANTIDOTE: *No Communication*: CD

Another solid release from these guys, with potent hooks, gallop beats, and lyrics, while not cribbed from an MDC record, are topical enough to sound like they're aware there are some serious things afoot to think about. It's especially nice that they decided to sing bunch of the tunes in Dutch. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

ANTIDOTE: *No Communication*: CD

Now I'm not sure that if it's just because I saw that it was on Rodent Popsicle, or it was the cover art of punk choking out a business type and injecting him with a big ol' syringe, but I was expecting this to be a lot more, uh "crusty" than it is. In reality, Antidote is straight-up hardcore punk rock with a cool melodic streak going through it. Not melodic like "woah-eh-oh" and all that. Melodic in that he's not screaming unintelligibly over tuneless screech. This is really good stuff. Part way though, I finally placed what it reminded me of: early Funeral Oration.

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Oddly, I hadn't noticed that Antidote was also from Holland at that point. Must be something in the water over there. —Ty Stranglehold (Rodent Popsicle)

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE: *The Punk Rock Anthology: 2x CD*

A nice career overview, warts 'n' all, of this bands lengthy career. Their classics, like "I Hate People" and "We Are the League," sound just as gloriously virulent as they did when they first hit the streets, the mid-late '80s "rock" period is as bad as one would expect, and their return to form is more than welcome. Two discs, the lion's share fine listening and, best of all, one can hear the original version of "So What," a song rife with so much piss and vinegar that not even Metallica's attempts at covering it can diminish its sheer nastiness. A great look at the music of a great band. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.cherryred.co.uk)

ASTPAl: *Corruption Concealed Under Deceptive Slogans*: CD

When a band says they're out to repair the sullied name of some musical genre or another, in this case "melodic hardcore," nine times outta ten they only manage to exacerbate the problem. This is no exception. Starting out like new metal "hardcore" bands like Converge, then suddenly popping in some sorta pop hook or quasi-emo noodling, the songs never gel. The lyrics sound very heartfelt and "punk," but they're squandered on music that just don't quite work. —Jimmy Alvarado (Jumpstart)

AUDACITY / MAKEOUT PARTY, THEE: Split 7"

Audacity: Multi-part, melodic DIY punk in the vein of The Carrie Nations and ADD/C that stretches its legs through several time and tempo changes. This stuff is hard to pin down too specifically beyond, "It's good. I like it," because I get the feeling they're in the midst of expanding and figuring themselves out, which is a great thing for a new band. Thee Makeout Party: Scruffy punks doing *Pet Sounds*-era Beach Boys a total solid. They've got the sunshine and mental illness balance down to a tee. (A little bit of sun is good for you, but too much is cancer sorta thing, in songs.) When I first heard of "psychedelic pop," this is what I heard in my brain. If they were to start a cult in the next couple of years, I wouldn't be surprised. For fans of early Redd Kross, wouldn't be too far of a stretch. Plus, like Redd Kross, both bands have cute girls! —Todd (Trabajo)

BAD DIRTY HATE: Self-titled: 7" EP

Absolutely crazed Japanese hardcore that finds its power not in blast beats but sheer intensity of delivery—understanding

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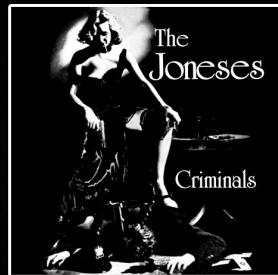
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the lyrics ain't essential to figuring out they've got a serious bee in their bonnet. Some white-hot listening, here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Irukandji)

BAD DUDES: *Eat Drugs*: CD

The bad dudes responsible for Miracle Chosuke resume their aural terror with a new band that expands on their prior Devo-punk explorations by adding a little Kraftwerk into the mix. Though a good hunk of what's here are instrumentals, they keep things nice and diverse and often veer off into unexpected territory. Nice 'n' interesting. —Jimmy Alvarado (Retard Disco)

BAD SPORTS: *Self-titled*: 7"

I like it. It's good, in a Kickz, Kill-A-Watts, Rip Offs, Dead Boys-barely-out-of-puberty way. Reverb all over the edges and insect-in-flight guitar bits. I have a feeling that if this wasn't three guys from three different bands (Maaster Gaiden, Pumpers, Wax Museums) in a compressed time putting four songs together, if it was given a bit more organic interconnection, choruses were repeated less, and it had more dripping, electric sloopage throughout, I'd be all "god damn!" over it. I like it. It's good. Three hundred made. Silk screen covers. —Todd (Big Action)

BALAAM & THE ANGEL:

The Greatest Story Ever Told: CD

BALAAM & THE ANGEL:

Live Free or Die: CD

To my mind, there are two very distinct strains running through the east U.K.

death rock/goth stuff: the edgy, arty, obsessed with the darker side of life stuff and the simpy, slick, quasi-pretty boy/girl gloom, pop that pretty much ended up diluting and fucking up the former. Rare it was when a band falling in the latter camp was worth a piss and these guys are not an exception to that rule. On *Greatest Story*, they milk dry the gray area between The Mission and mid-period Cult, managing to sand down whatever edge those templates had in the first place. The band, who deftly execute songs that are at least well written but not in the least threatening, are hampered with a singer who has neither the range or the singular quality of an Astbury, or even a Hussey. Their attempts to follow the Cult's lead into hard rock land, as chronicled on *Live Free or Die*, are not much of an improvement, either. Rumor is they're back together. I wish 'em luck. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.cherryred.co.uk)

BATMOBILE:

The Clarendon Ballroom Blitz: CD

Reader's Digest version of the story: There once was a ratty U.K. pub/dive called the Klubfoot that became the spiritual home of psychobilly. Many a legend and would-be legend graced the stage there, and many of their sets were put to tape. Sadly, those tapes got lost over the years. But take heart—they were found and are now being baked and transferred. This is the first of the batch, a heretofore unreleased early set in its entirety by a band now well entrenched in the "legends" camp.

The sound is absolutely pristine, the performance is spirited, and the songs themselves are a hoot. Put it on, turn it up, close yer eyes, and pretend you're there on the dance floor wrecking it up with the best of 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.cherryred.co.uk)

BIG SHANKS: *Big Feelin': 7"*

Considering the third-rate record sleeve, I had no expectations for this record. Put it on... not bad. Black Flag-inspired ferocity captured on a pristine version of an Electric Eels-style production. This is sort of what Black Time is doing right now, only not as good... less dynamics and nowhere near as erudite as (Black Time's) Lemmy Caution—who probably uses Rocket From The Tombs acetates as dust pans to clean his house. Big Shanks revel in that amateurish stuff, but ineptitude as an affected style is hard to make interesting. I mean, only Duchamp elected great readymades. —Ryan Leach (Boom Chick, www.boomchickrecords.com)

BIRTHDAY SUITS /

THE BLIND SHAKE: Split 7"

We've all got bands, record labels, and/or eras that we think are overlooked by the rest of the world. A big one for me is the poppy side of the late '80s/early '90s Seattle scene. Bands like Pure Joy, Flop, and the Fastbacks who borrowed from pop as much as they did hard rock and punk. The Birthday Suits, featuring Matthew and Hideo formerly of Sweet JAP, could run with that crowd.

"Winter Coat" is heavy, catchy, and kind of funny. Not as fast as Sweet JAP, but just as good. Great song. The Blind Shake serve up the Mudhoney side of that Seattle coin: dissonant guitars, big floor tom action, snare drum lurching on the one and three. —Mike Faloon (Learning Curve)

BIRUSHANAH: *Akai Yami*: CD

I don't quite know what to make of it. Intro track sounds like traditional Japanese music from centuries ago or for a soundtrack for a period movie. Track two starts off with a bass guitar playing traditional music once again, and then momentum moves forward with additional Japanese-sounding instruments adding to the mix. Five minutes down the line and the mood changes. The guitars and drumming come in and the essence of doom is unleashed. Repetitive rhythms and what sounds like people banging on metal creates a sound of mayhem. Not sure what the lyrics might be conveying, but there is a sense of despair and pain. A hair over twenty minutes, and I feel like I went through a mediaeval battle scene. Track three, the final track, which clocks in over seventeen minutes, closes this aural experiment with a doom/sludge track that has more metal elements and can be compared to a faster version of the band Corrupted. If you want to push your musical boundaries and appreciate bands from Japan, this release should meet the challenge. —Donofthedead (Level Plane)

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**BLANK ITS: "Windows Are Dirty"
b/w "Divorce": 7"**

The Blank Its deliver two filthy, bouncing pop songs that are dirtier than drinking the last swig of a beer into which someone has deposited their cigarette butt. "Windows Are Dirty" starts off with a massive beat and swirling guitar riff that gets into you like a parasite worming its way through your intestines. The vocals are snotty and gorgeously distorted. "Divorce" comes bounding off the B-side like a deranged ex-boyfriend hell bent on keeping the closest of tabs on his former sweetheart. It's menacingly catchy and sounds as dangerous as unprotected sex with someone you met at the local dirt bag meat market. I was not a fan of their first 7" and wondered what sort of deranged narcotics those who reviewed it favorably were on. Clearly, it was me who needed a large dose of snortable, powdered Blank Its to elicit the appropriate high. —Josh Benke (Sweet Rot)

BOYS CLUB: 2-D World: 7"

Yay! This record could have come out in the heyday of the Flakes, the Fevers, and other bands that start with F! And the guy who produced it, Brian Hermosillo, was in the Fevers, the Retardos (SuperTeen is go!), and even the long-forgotten Donny Denim! I mean, it's hard for me to even be objective about this! Which is fine, because I DON'T have to be objective about this! Oh, um. What does it sound like? A fair question, indeed! It sounds like one cup Rip Offs, two teaspoons

Flakes, and four tablespoons Fevers! In other words, garage punk of the best variety! It's more in the straightforward Rip Offs camp, and less in the crazy buri buri Brentwoods camp, but now I'm splitting hairs! If this were a cereal, it'd be Donkey Kong, Jr. cereal! Yes, the successor to Donkey Kong Crunch! Like Froot Loops, but more ridiculous! Yum! —Maddy (Bachelor)

**BROADCAST ZERO: Yesterday,
You Could Change the World: CD**

This 'un straddles the fence a bit between catchy political punk rock and playing-to-a-template chanty punk rock. They really don't add anything unique music-wise, but the fact that they try to address more than the stereotypical trappings of punk of this ilk is commendable. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rebel Time)

BROKEDOWNS, THE: Six Songs: CDEP

I wish I personally knew the guys in the Brokedowns so I could say, "Hey bro, don't break my heart in 2008 like Witches With Dicks did in 2007. Fucking stay together." Heavier and bolder with less harmony but more girth than WWD, The Brokedowns rock that melodic aggression (see: *Midwestern Songs...* [duh]) that can have you nodding your head to the verses and then, as soon as the chorus comes, pump the fist. *Six Songs* isn't enough. More please. —Daryl (Cassette Deck)

**CARBONAS, THE:
Blackout Waiting to Happen: 7"EP**

A re-issue of the 2004 debut, and if you missed it (as I did), what a great

introduction to the band. At times, reminiscent of The Feelers, where the lines between garage (the sound) and hardcore (the energy) are blurred and the best of both are balled up in a jagged, crackling, stupendous firecracker. (Think Oblivians meet Negative Approach meets something that blows up in a chunky splatter.) At other times, reminiscent of The Retards: chaotic snot with a clandestine pop sensibility. I also just got their latest LP on Goner, and that's making me think that seeking out their entire catalog would be far from a waste of time. Addictive. —Todd (Douchemaster)

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE: Demo: Cassette

Daryl told me that Hey Girl! has some connection to this band. After moments of grueling research on the world wide web (of time wasting), I do believe that the bassist from HG! is in CK (which is also an all-female band) doing the same thing. While Hey Girl! was messy pop punk, this is angry hardcore punk. The lyrics range from personal to political and a mixture of the two. Not bad overall, but it could use a little more umph. I'm hoping that this is only because it's a demo. —Vincent (Self-released)

CAT PARTY: "Jigsaw Thoughts"

b/w "Entitled": 7"

Bummmed rock. But still rock. (At one time, known as Mope Rock.) Just bummed in a Marc Almond, slower Sisters Of Mercy, Cure way, but done by folks who've been put through the

punk grist mill. That means the guitar's a bit more interested in weaving instead of blasting, the lyrics can be decoded on the first couple of listens, and the whole enterprise is atmospheric in a low-cloud, grey-day way, but languidly catchy and well constructed. For fans of Manikin and The Fuses, too. Good job. —Todd (Rich Bitch)

CHEAP TIME: Self-titled: CD

I like Cheap Time. That's something a lot of motherfuckers thought I wouldn't say—like I constitutionally couldn't stomach the whole genre of power pop. *I DON'T NEED ALEX CHILTON'S "LIKE FLIES ON SHERBET" OR REED'S BERLIN TO MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A WINNER!* Nevertheless, there's something to that claim—that I hate power pop. And it has to do with the completely vapid bands celebrating the style in the last five years... like when everyone was making the transition from post punk to power pop overnight. Joy Division records traded in for Nick Lowe buttons and The Boys T-shirts. It felt insincere—like Reagan denying rumors that he hated the working poor—and ill-fitting—like Mike Dukakis posing in a tank. So where does Cheap Time fit in? In the small minority of bands/people with a genuine interest in power pop as a means of communicating some sort of idea—not an end in itself (playing an abused genre) but as a means to an end—a contribution to songwriting with the added joys of power pop. Cheap Time's got great lyrics; the opener has this great play on words about being

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LONGSHOT MUSIC

late... I can't understand half the lyrics, but the gist is great. The guitar work on the record varies at times—like really '81 The Cars kind of shit and then controlled noise—similar to the joys of Wire's second and third record. And there's just this really sophomore reliance on Roxy Music's self-titled record. But, I mean, it's not like Cheap Time borrows equitably from Ferry and Eno's masterpiece—a little from "2HB," a line from "Would You Believe?" The kids straight rip-off the breaks of "Virginia Plain" relentlessly—not to mention a strong reliance on Graham Simpson's (wherever the fuck you are, glam rock Pete Best) bass work on the song. It's unbelievably endearing and really quite funny—I fucking started laughing out loud when I heard it! This debut record proves that Cheap Time is loaded with promise... another strong outing from In the Red (after a hiccup or two)—a record label that refuses to give into the vast sea of mediocre music. (Be on the lookout for an upcoming Black Time record. As bona fide as Namella J. Kim.) —Ryan Leach (In the Red, www.intheredrecords.com)

CHORDS, THE: *The Mod Singles Collection*: CD

A nice bit of post-Jam mod pop from a group that were actually contemporaries of said Jam and were also connected at one point to one Jimmy Pursey, who produced a single or two here. Jangly, but loud, guitars, catchy hooks, and the requisite energy make this worth a number of spins at the very least, and

the detailed liner notes and inclusion of a few heretofore unreleased tracks make this mandatory for the band's fans. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

CHRONICITY: Self-titled: EP

At first listen, these guys reminded me of the Fall. Then as the songs progressed, they started to remind me of Red Monkey. Humorless post punk with political intent, though they offer nothing unique or interesting enough to warrant more than a passing nod. —M.Avg (Obscurist Press)

CHURCH OF THE SATURDAY SAINTS: *14 Rotten Tomatoes*: CD

These guys are hip to so many vibes all at once—'60s pop, punk, folk, country—that it's kinda fun just to try to pick out influences as they play. Their songs are really fuggin' well written, too, and show an attention to craft that makes me all the more pissed that other bands don't put in as much effort. Thing is, though, that I really wish the singer was just a little more diverse in his delivery. His crunchy "world's finest singin' rassler" voice has only one volume: over the top. I imagine that's kind of the point, but the songs scream for a little more attention to dynamics—soft here, howl there, a little less howl over here, and so on. Still, the quality of the songs win out and make for a pretty danged good release. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vinehell)

CLOAK/DAGGER: Kamikazes: 7"

One of the newest releases from Grave Mistake and this is definitely a winner. I

listened to Cloak/Dagger's *We Are* CD from Jade Tree and couldn't really find anything I liked about it, but I guess all you have to do is take one song, slap it on one side of a 45, throw a Modern Lovers' cover on the B side, and suddenly we have the future of rock'n'roll. That may be an exaggeration, but these songs are still devastatingly original, driving rock'n'roll that knows how to manipulate a guitar to its new expected potential. —Daryl (Grave Mistake)

COMPLETE FAILURE: *Perversions of Guilt*: CD

Hell. Whether or not it exists, most people can visualize some version of the joint. (I see hell as a cross between *Saw II* and a *Will and Grace* re-run.) Often overlooked is the auditory factor; what does hell sound like? My money's on *Perversions of Guilt*. Everything on the grindcore grocery list is here: swallowed-the-mic vocals, ceaseless double kick drum action, and rusty barbed wire guitars that may in fact violate your soul. —Mike Faloon (Supernova, www.supernovarecords.net)

COPYRIGHTS, THE: *Make Sound*: LP

Always leave it to It's Alive to press the vinyl version of one of the latest offerings from your new favorite band. Yummy colored vinyl too! Joy! —Mr. Z (It's Alive)

CRETEENS, THE: *K-Way Bleu*: 7"

When I said a couple of months ago that I'd be on the lookout for more from these sickos, I didn't realize it would be

in my mailbox! Big thanks to Razorcake HQ for that one. On to the record. We have more creepy cover art on this one. It's a photo collage this time with some Gandhi-looking guy giving the evil eye to a porn star with donuts on her tits, among other things. Did I mention that she is fellating a rocket launcher being held by a young boy? Anyways, the music still kicks all kinds of ass in a low budget Regulations kind of way. I like this like watermelon. Raw and kind of seedy. —Ty Stranglehold (Boom Chick)

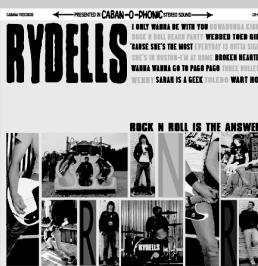
CRETEENS, THE: *K-Way Bleu*: 7"

"I've got beer shits! I've got beer shits!" goes the chorus of the final song. Yes, but why did you feel the need to record it? Why did you feel the need to go to Benji's Mom's house in Paris, France, and make a permanent document of these noises? I appreciate your exuberance—which comes across loud and clear on this record—but still, why? Did somebody say your music was clever? Did someone tell you that the sloppy, drunk tunes you put together about Dungeons & Dragons were one-of-a-kind? Was it your mom? I agree that there is definitely a level of fun involved, but it's more of the "We're gonna play your basement and get totally waaaaasted!" sort of fun, rather than the "Dude, we need to share this music with the world" kind of fun, you know what I mean? Did you have a lot of extra money? Why couldn't you just spend that money on more beer? The world and, more importantly, the kids watching you in the basement, would have thanked you. —MP Johnson (Boom Chick)

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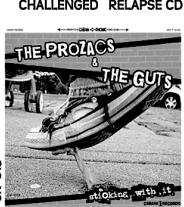
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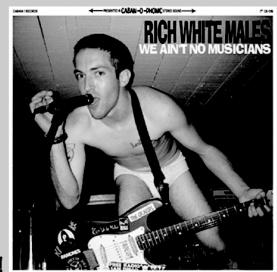


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CRUSADERS OF LOVE:***Looking for Treasure: 7"***

Two fun, poppy, garage rock songs chock full of fuzz and reverb from this French group. Nothing here is breaking any new ground, but that doesn't mean that it isn't nice to put this on and take a step back to the sound of the Beach Boys, Barracudas, and '60s girl groups for a few moments. This is out on Stephen from Beat Beat Beat's new label. I'll be keeping an eye open to see what these guys come up with next. -Dave Dillon (Danger)

DAILY VOID: *Man/Machine: 7" EP*

Three more tracks of odd aural chaos from a band comprised of members of the Functional Blackouts. A-side is a sludgy bit of fun that sounds like a cross between Flipper and early Saccharine Trust, and the flip has two more up-tempo ditties no less unique than the noise on the other side. You either love 'em or hate 'em, but odds are you ain't gonna come outta listening to 'em feeling indifferent. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.floridasdying.com)

DAISY CUTTER / WORLD EATER:***Split: 7"***

From the band names and cover art, I was expecting this to be some third rate grindcore garbage. Fortunately, this is not the case. Daisy Cutter are thrash hardcore similar to bands like No Comment and Crossed Out. The speeds they hit are nuts. It's like the drummer is a wood chipper machine. I love the sick tone of the bass, and

how it holds the whole quaking mess together. A good ten years ago these guys could have been on Slap A Ham. World Eater is a little less noisier, but still thrash. The vocalist is good at conveying the manic desperation of the lyrics. Somewhere between a talking voice and shouting voice. Check out "Disposable Existence." Sounds like his world is falling apart. Favorite song on this side, though, is the opener, "Neck in a Noose" with the chorus, "Everything is going black," repeated over and over with intensity. Niiiiccccccc!!! -M.Avg (Constant Migraine)

DAN MELCHIOR UND DAS MENACE: *Christmas for the Crows: LP*

A bit enigmatic. Quiet and subdued music where even the spaces in between are part of the overall sound. Too smart to be garage rock, though it would be quick and easy to paint this with that brush, but... I imagine if Billy Childish had fronted Thee Homosexuals, it would have sounded something like this. At the core is an Americana sound, but off that are strains of post punk, rock, and whatever else. Really, this is not music easily described, which is a great thing. Just listen to this and sort it out for yourself. -M.Avg (Daggerman, www.daggermandrecords.com)

DARK AGES: *4 Songs: 7"*

Another blow to those old assholes who said stupid shit like, "Hardcore is dead, go home." Dark Ages wreak unholy hardcore havoc with these vinyl grooves and why the hell shouldn't

they? I'm so glad this made it to vinyl. I'm not exactly sure why the same four songs had to be pressed onto the A and B sides, but they're so good I'm just gonna accept it, flip it over, and listen to them again. -Daryl (Get Revenge)

DAYGLO ABORTIONS:***Feed Us a Fetus: LP***

I know last time when I reviewed *Out of the Womb* by Dayglow Abortions, I said it contained all of their best songs. Well, I kind of lied. When I was a lad around the age of twelve, I played minor hockey (as most Canadian boys do). The kicker was that punk rocker kids were a bit of a rarity in organized sports, so I didn't have a lot of friends. I think the only reason I wasn't lynched was that I was good at hockey. Well, we found ourselves at a tournament down in Washington state and the custom was to get "psyched up" for the game by listening to music. AC/DC was the order of the day, when I told the team that I had a tape that was perfect for our American adversaries. Somehow I was given a chance and within thirteen seconds the entire dressing room was screaming "PROUD TO BE A CANADIAN... PASS ME ANOTHER BEER!" That day we won by a lot, and the punker wasn't so weird to the jocks. Anyways, the review is like this (Best Songs from *Out of the Womb* + ("Proud To Be Canadian")) + A few more classics = *Feed Us A Fetus* = Best Dayglo Abortions record PERIOD! Another great reissue by Unrest. -Ty Stranglehold (Unrest)

DEAD FRIENDS: *Them Vs. Them: 7"*

Three songs per side of house show post-hardcore. Not flashy or uninterestingly striving to be innovative, just pure emotion and heart. In minute-long intervals they use an honest, non-condescending, mature approach. Six-hundred-and-sixty-six kudo marks for the Ursula K. LeGuin quote. -Daryl (Obscurist Press/IFB/Drugged Conscience)

DEAD KINGS / SICK SICK SICK:***Split: 7" EP***

Dead Kings: Meat 'n' potatoes punk stuff with Marshalled guitars. Sick Sick Sick: Two more or less hardcore tunes, one inspired by *Night of the Living Dead* director George Romero and a sorta bio about porn star Harry Reems. -Jimmy Alvarado (Scat Boy)

DEAD MECHANICAL:***Insubordination Fest 2007: CD***

Seven-song song live mini-set from this Baltimore power trio. Take the best elements of SLF, Hüsker Dü, and Gang of Four. Put them in a blender and insert a Krazy straw. Sit back, sip and enjoy. "Guantanamo Calling" and "The Only Bad Thing That Ever Happened" rock some seriously bitchin' guitar lines. Look for DM to rip the house place down to the studs for Insubordination Fest 2008. -Sean Koepnick (Insubordination)

DEAD UNCLES: Demo: Cassette

They would stand to benefit if they were to ditch their vocalist. He, their



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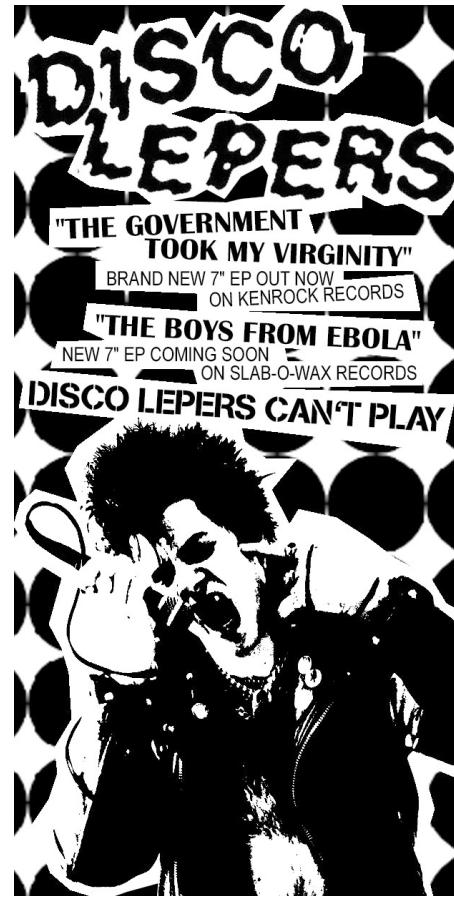
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vocalist, sounds like he listens to a lot of Blink-182 while the rest of the band listens to nondescript pop punk. They also cover "Rumble Seats and Running Boards" by Cleveland Bound Death Sentence. Trying to erase their version from my memory, I listened to the original a few times. It didn't work; theirs is still haunting me. That aside, I don't think that the song should have been covered, at least not with the original lyrics in their entirety. A few years back, I read an interview with a member of Jawbreaker (either Blake or Adam if memory serves). The interviewer asked if the band found other bands covering "Boxcar," weird—a song that Dead Uncles thought about covering instead per the liner notes—because of the particular events mentioned in the lyrics. I don't think that the band thought much of it. However, I find myself in the same mindset of the interviewer, and the case holds here. —Vincent (Spicy Soup, myspace.com/spicysoupproductionsct)

DEEP SLEEP: *Manic Euphoria: 7"*

Deep Sleep haven't changed much up since the killer *You're Screwed 7"*, which means you've got some more Reagan Youth/SST-inspired melodic hardcore that still totally rules and blows by a bit too quickly. These lads have got this down to a science and, for my money, do this thing just a touch better than their countless contemporaries. Sometimes I deeply appreciate some predictability in my life, and this is one of those times. —Dave Williams (Sorry State)

DEEP SLEEP: *Manic Euphoria: 7"*

What a great follow up by these Richmond, VA punks. This band saunters the fine line of flawlessness and failure so genuinely and gracefully it just makes you want to shrink into a single particle so you can fit into the grooves of this record and ride the guitar riffs off into the sunset. Totally angry West Coast-influenced punk with a no bullshit attitude. "Textbook Timebomb" is one amazing song. Its riffage will absorb into your bloodstream and make you forget all your responsibilities. —Daryl (Grave Mistake)

DESTINATION: OBLIVION: *Winter Solstice: CD*

This disc arrived scuffed. Of the nine new tracks, I could only hear one stuttering song. If a strobe light could play synths it would sound like this. Abandoning the CD, D.O.'s myspace page had the first track "Awake Pulse," reminding me of *Halloween's* theme song with an intense piano line leading into crunchy guitars. Damian threw a few new mixes like "Sick v2" and "Self Inflicted Noise Mix" onto *Solstice*. It's just too bad I can't hear 'em. —Kristen K (Apocalypse Machine)

DONITA SPARKS and THE STELLAR MOMENTS: *Transmiticate: CD*

It seems that L-7's Donita Sparks has mellowed with time, but she can still get real heavy, fuzzy, and buzzy. Both the first and last tracks on this CD—"Fly Feather Fly" and "Into the HI FI" are the most rockingest, L-7ish

tunes of the bunch with that familiar, dirty, wicked buzz, but it's not punk rock...its punk-influenced rock that continues to grow on the listener with each successive listen. At first, it all sounds kind of the same, but turn it up and listen deeper. Donita is doing a lot within the slower rhythms with a lot of echo, vibrato, and multiple fluid-layers of sonic depth. Her vocals are still husky-sweet, and a distinctive sense of fun and humor floats up from the pleasantly vibrating resonance. Where L-7 was overtly angry and abrasive, this disc is definitely more laid-back, frequently introspective, with mid-tempo, head-noddingly catchy tunes that are rather trance inducing. At first, I thought "Dare Dare" was going to be an ELO cover, but it turned out to be a solid original performed with traditional '70s rock arrangement and a distinctly humorous edge. "He's got the Honey" is the fuzziest of all and sounds like it could be the theme song for a punk rock kids show...tough punk kids. Yes, Ms. Sparks has evolved and grown over time and this is what it sounds like. She practically did this whole thing by herself and the others got to follow along. —Marcus Solomon (Sparks Fly)

DOUBLE NEGATIVE: *Raw Energy: 7"*

Last year's *The Wonderful and Frightening World of Double Negative* LP totally tore my head off, and I've been seriously anticipating some new material since shortly after its release. The *Raw Energy 7"* is said to more

accurately recreate the band's intense live spectacle, and it is indeed a raw, piercing, destructive six minutes of Void/early-C.O.C.-esque hardcore. Desperate, angry, and raging. —Dave Williams (Sorry State)

DOWN AND AWAY: *Reclaim the Radio: CD*

Sweden's Down And Away finally hits stateside record shelves with this collection, their first U.S. release to date. It's a compilation of some of the catchiest material from four of their prior European releases. Neither 1990s enough nor formulaic enough to be dubbed pop punk, their sound is nonetheless on the more poppy side of melodic punk. Fans of pop punk or mainline 1977-infused punk will love Down And Away. There's also an added charm due to the English-written lyrics by non-native speakers. There's nothing too hilariously E.S.L. here (none of it would come out of Balki Bartokomous's mouth), but the lyrics still have an unintentional comedic quality to them. This is fun, rocking pop that deserves a new audience. —Art Ettinger (Warbird)

DUTCHESS & THE DUKE:

She's the Dutchess, He's the Duke: CD

Though I might be confusing them with another band, the last thing I remember hearing from The Flying Dutchmen was a disc filled with no-holds-barred noise and little else. Expecting the same here, what instead came out of the speakers was surprisingly well written and catchy

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folk stuff with male and female vocals. Normally this ain't my cup of tea at all, but these kids are more Dylan than Baez vocal-wise and know how to crank out an interesting tune on acoustic instruments with lyrics that more than hold their own. No small feat these days, that. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hardly Art)

EATER: *The Album: 2 x CD*

Hell yeah, this is great. You have your Clash, you have your Sex Pistols, etc., etc. You need to have Eater in your life as well. Otherwise it's going to be a bit incomplete. This has been reissued a couple times before, but this is *thee* edition to pick up, for sure. Everything they recorded studio-wise is on here, along with some live tracks. Primo U.K. punk from the "early days." Driving, tuneful, catchy, lewd, crude, and on and on. All description used to turn you on to music can be applied. Songs like "No Brains," "You," and "I Don't Need It" are punk personified, or sonic-fied. Get it?? Then there's the out of left field tracks like "Michael's Monetary System" and "Luv & Piece." Not to mention the great covers, a practice I usually frown upon. But Eater does it right. "Sweet Jane," "Fifteen" ("Sixteen" reworked), "Waiting for the Man," and "Jeepster" get ran through the transmogrifier and come out Eater-ized. Disc one is "The Album," and disc two collects the singles and more. Absolutely essential. —M.Avg (Anagram)

ECOLI: *Self-titled: 7"EP*

Ecoli reminds me of the very first wave of Touch and Go stuff. It sounds like the

band can barely contain themselves, that eight songs is a good number to put on a 7", and that they're socially aware in warty, anti-authority, anti-racist ways. It's chaotic thrash punk. Like both the Necros and Fix (and Out Cold), the more listens this gets, the more little musical flourishes—tempo changes, tricky guitar bits—seep around the initial face-peeling blast. Whores, cops, the military, and thrash ultimately rely on one thing to be judged by: effective penetration. —Todd (Stress Domain)

ELEMAE / MEMORIAL / SOON: *Split: CD*

All three of the bands on this three-way split play painfully bland, murky rock that relies on computerized effects to make the experience all the more excruciating. These guys all need interventions from friends and family reminding them that drum machines were never cool. Memorial is the least annoying of the three bands because of the sweet vocals, but, overall, this CD is less fun than a root canal. At least a root canal comes with drugs. —Art Ettinger (Engineer)

EMPTY GRAVE: *The Dark: EP*

Hardcore, pure and simple. Definitely earl- to-mid eighties influences with its straightforward and tuneful aspects. More mid tempo than thrash as well. Five songs in all, and the second side, with "Mental Disorder" and "DUI or Die," is the preferred. Comes on pink vinyl (maybe only 100 pressed?). —M.Avg (Absent)

ENDLESS BLOCKADE, THE:

Primitive: CD

Genuine anger and disgust seethes in this music. Powerviolence that embodies the moniker. Auditory warhammers are swung back and forth with no regard to safety of those around. If you're in the way, you're gonna get your skull crushed into paste. Why hit once when you can hit again and again, and harder with each blow? The bass is laden in doom and fills the room with its presence, and the guitars send it over into the void. They also utilize noise and power electronics, as some may call it, to great effect. A masterpiece. —M.Avg (20 Buck Spin)

ENDLESS MIKE JAMBOX:

Another Hot Freshy Fresh: CD

Almost equal parts of a watered-down, slowed-down version of Lifetime and a Drive-Thru band without the turd polish. I don't know what the band name means, but I think the album title means a steaming pile of shit. —Vincent (Madison Underground, www.madisonundergroundpress.com)

ESTRANGED, THE: *Static Thoughts: CD*

Minimalism is tricky to nail punk (and post punk). Because it's a reduction to the bare elements without losing power. For maximum effect, it's knowing exactly what *not* to play as it is what to play. Skeletons with phantom power. When to pound, when to tap. When to lunge. When to hide in wait. And that's why any music that's sparse, yet powerful and totally on target, there

aren't many bands that have stood the test of time. Wire. Early Gang Of Four. And to bring up those two bands isn't in any way to suggest that The Estranged are regressive, it's to show that there's a high water mark, and if you're going to be in band, why not aim for that? There's no hiding behind a wall of sound, no banks of effect pedals, just well-constructed, icy, and sparse songs that are simultaneously filled with doomed thoughts, self-immolation, and joy. Excellent. —Todd (Dirtnap)

FINAL DRAFT: *310: EP*

I remember when these guys first started playing out. They were a decent powerviolence band, but nothing really stood out. Fuggin' hell, they have progressed by leaps and bounds! This stuff is truly pissed! Nine songs hammered out with pure hate. Nothing sounds serene or proper here. It's all fucked up, twisted, and bleak. And it's all great. Antisocial sounds for the antisocial. I don't know man, but I can't help but think Final Draft are thee West Coast powerviolence band. —M.Avg (To Live A Lie)

FRANCIS HAROLD AND THE HOLOGRAMS:

"The Eagle Can't Fly with One Wing" b/w "Two Faggots One Cunt": 7"

After listening to the a-side, I'm surprised that I didn't put on a different record when I got up to flip this over. It's vacuous noise—no wave. (No, I don't know if the b-side is derogatory. No lyrics were included for it, as opposed to

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the a-side. All I could discern through the blizzard of turds was the title.) –Vincent (Going Underground)

FRIENDLY FIRE: Demo 2008: CD-R

Cover art makes it look like some kind of Pat Hayes-era Lookout or Very Small Records dumpster-diving pop-punk project, but the actual music makes it sound like six outtakes from the first ((and only, come to think of it)) Rites Of Spring album, which was the first record anyone to my knowledge ever called "emo" ((don't be scared, people also said that it sounded like The Jam. It actually sounded like neither)), and certainly the only record that anyone ever called "emo" that was actually any good. Beats me, man, that album is over twenty years old and this band hails from Washington DC same as Rites Of Spring, maybe it's their kids or something. Sounds like the kind of thing that my drunken roommates would've woken me up with when they came home from the bars in 1987. Make of that what you will. BEST SONG: "Floodplane" i think? BEST SONG TITLE: This is not really a "Best Song Title" kind of band. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Band points out that they "are not the crunk band." i will alert the media.–Rev. Nørø (Friendly Fire)

FUR CUPS FOR TEETH:

Fun Luck You Keep: 2 x CD

This is a kind of weird arrangement, with two CDs in one case each with half an album's worth of songs on

them. One side is billed as "techno" and the other side as "rock." I'm not super hot on techno most of the time, so I listened to that side first. The songs were all right but probably more suited to a club full of cute dancing people with brightly colored drinks than one Canadian writer's quiet bedroom. Surprisingly, I ended up liking the techno side better than the rock side, mostly because the rock side sounds so much like Le Tigre, I would be shocked if they weren't a direct influence. I like Le Tigre, but I don't need more than one Le Tigre. –Jennifer Whiteford (Heartcore, www.furcupsforteeth.com)

FURIOUS SEASONS, THE: Self-titled: CD

It is hard for me to approach a CD objectively when the first song contains the line, "I wish you wonderment." I think my fifteen-year-old self might like this album because it seems like good music to sulk to, but my thirty-two-year-old self just got that uncomfortable knot near my sternum that comes when someone I hardly know tells me too much of their personal information. – Jennifer Whiteford (Eskimo)

G.G. ELVIS AND THE T.C.P. BAND: *Back from the Dead: CD*

Oxnard band of roughnecks give us an all covers record of Elvis Presley treats. I like that the "Fat Elvis" is the singer. Members of Bad Samaritans, NOFX, and Ill Repute. Keep in ear open for the '80s hardcore snippets chucked in for kicks. I don't know how many more

times I would listen to this, but it did bring a smile to my face a few times. –Sean Koepenick (Mental)

GING NANG BOYZ: *Libido E.P.: 12"EP*

I was attracted to this by the cover art, which has a drawing of some guy lighting a mouthful of cigarettes while kind of headlocking some boy who's pissing on his leg. I thought it was kinda odd, though surely not as odd as it would be if the EP were titled *Fetish*. Still, I'm all about a mouthful of cigarettes. I didn't notice it initially, but the back cover is a drawing of some people in a classroom; one of the guys has an erection that lifts his desk all the way up to the ceiling. The note accompanying this 12" also attracted me. It said something along the lines of this band being fans of East Bay punk and Weezer. I took that as an implication that they meld the two sounds together. Since I like East Bay punk and don't like Weezer, I wanted to hear what this Japanese band did with their influences. Well, it sounds like what I would imagine a Ramones cover by Weezer would sound like. Take what you love about the Ramones (everything, I'm sure), drag it out so it's between four and five minutes or so in length, then completely ruin it by Weezering up with their annoying brand of pop. –Vincent (Phat 'n' Phunkey Phonics)

GIVE UP ALL HOPE / VAE VICTUS:

Split: 7"
Give Up All Hope: This U.K. band starts things off strong with a searing metallic crust attack with a d-beat drive.

They have the power and the metallic edge of a band like Hellshock and brutally pound through the chords to showcase their energy. I really like the fact that the vocals were not super low in a cookie monster delivery. They are more yelled and remind me of the U.K. bands from the late '80s to the early '90s doing this type of music. Two ace tracks in my book. Vae Victor: Hailing from Sydney, Australia, this female-led band also plays metallic crust that has more straightforward punk moments. Musically, they are epic in delivery with good uses of tempo changes and guitar layering to make the sound bold. Vocals are the key here, though. From yelling to guttural lows and to actual singing, the delivery matches up to the energy and mood of the music. If you follow this genre, this is a great sampling from two bands that we should hear more from in the future. –Donothedead (Trujaca Fala)

GLEAMGARDEN / BROWNTROUT:

Split: 7"

Yes! How did I get so many good records for review this time around? I don't know! But never mind that! Time for a basic lesson in logic. Take Premise A: Every record on Snuffy Smiles is at least good, and often totally awesome. Take Premise B: This record is on Snuffy Smiles. Ergo? Yes, this rules! Total No-Idea-ish punk rock in the vein of Tiltwheel, Dan Padilla, and (a better) Hot Water Music. And I fully support taking a good formula (say, melodic punk rock, or Ramones-style

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garage rock) and creating record after record that all sound pretty similar, but all are, well, the equivalent of yummy Trix! Yes, we all know. There's Trix and there's Froot Loops. And, yes, they're similar, but do you hear me saying, "Gee, that Trix rabbit is just totally copying the Froot Loops toucan. I mean, I can hardly eat this stuff. It all tastes the same!"? Nay! Sugar is sugar! And punk rock is punk rock! And this record rules, even if both bands sound basically the same! —Maddy (Snuffy Smiles)

GUANA BATZ: *Loan Sharks*: CD

Long has it been since I last heard this album, so it was nice to revisit it again with fresh ears. This is one of the more celebrated '80s English psychobilly bands and this album deftly illustrates why: by keeping the "psycho" a bit more restrained than some of their contemporaries, they managed to come up with tunes that were catchy enough to sing along to yet were delivered with enough swing to make a floor move. While this is yet another genre that's being beaten into the ground by countless bands with nary a whiff of originality, it's nice to hear what made it so special once. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.cherryred.co.uk)

GUITAR GANGSTERS:

Razor Cuts—*The Best of (So Far)*: CD

If you have any affection for the post-Slade poppy punk of bands like Cocksparrer, the post-Pistols explorations of the Professionals, or the mid-career high points of the Ramones

and you haven't heard these guys, you've been missing the boat. These guys hit all those markers with ease, yet still keep themselves firmly rooted in whatever present in which they find themselves and put enough of their own spin on the punk template to not sound like a tribute band. Their songs are intelligent, deftly executed and, most importantly, hellafied catchy, and this collection culled from their body of work shows they've been fairly consistent on all fronts over the course of their long life. This'll get some good wear 'n' tear on yer stereo. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

H2O: *Nothing to Prove*: CD

Back in my XL Strife hoodie and winter-camo pants days, I admittedly took issue with H2O's accessibility and the resulting gateway to my beloved New York hardcore for Warped Tour kids. These were dudes who *actually* grew up in New York City alongside the classic NYHC bands that I worshipped and emulated to no end and—quite typically, I should add—I was sitting in my hicktown basement bedroom criticizing H2O's "real"ness. Kids are stupid. Toby and co's first record in seven years really sounds no different than their (undeniably killer) debut, still conjuring the spirits of Warzone and Token Entry while just radiating sincerity, walking that fine line between "hard" and sensitive. Tear-jerking-yet-fist-pumping lyrics, insanely catchy choruses, and the requisite guest vocalists all over the record still get me going like nobody's

beeswax. Teenage me would've loved this shit and pretended not to. Luckily, current me has been finished pretending for quite a while and can unabashedly run around my apartment singing along, all smiles with a finger in the air. This is just like, the best. —Dave Williams (Bridge Nine)

HALO FAUNA: *Durak*: CD

There was something instantly familiar about this album, but not in a been-there-done-that way. More on the comforting side, like a blanket a friend knit you. It could be because the music is the sweet blend of folk punk and indie rock that reminds me why I always like Plan-It-X releases. As is my wont, I liked the poppy, sentimental tracks the best. "Exposure, Processing, and Recording" won me over with its catchy verses and cleaning-out-my-old-bedroom storyline. "Infamous Apology" also struck a we're-screwing-everything-up-for-future-generations chord with me. I generally like to avoid the "this band sounds like that band" style of reviewing, but I spent my whole first listen of this album trying to figure out who they reminded me of. Finally it hit me. The Weakerthans. Which is another possible reason for the home-made blanket familiarity of this album. That said, this band stands on its own. Consider my heartstrings tugged. —Jennifer Whiteford (Plan-It-X)

HAMMER BROS.: *The Vitality*: LP

Decent NYHC via Boston from this outfit. Thick sound, tuneful, and heavy without being metal. Somewhere

between the likes of Madball and Breakdown. They should have left the Cro-Mags cover ("Don't Tread on Me") off this though, as it's a tepid attempt and detracts from the overall impact of the originals. Which, as said at the beginning, aren't half bad. —M.Avg (F.N.S.)

HAND GRENADE SERENADE: *A Black Market Band*: CD

This makes me remember what it was like to be in my early twenties: kinda melodramatic where everything had a life or death desperation. The message on some of the songs is right on, but the screechy emo vocals combined with limp guitars didn't really do it for me. Plus, getting wasted and fucking in graveyards is sung about like it's a taboo novelty, rather than juvenile. —Kristen K (Son Of Bronson)

HATEWAVE: *Free Ringtones*: CD

On the back, right after the "recorded in 1995" info, are the words "Fuck Metal." This seems a bit oxymoronic since the cover would be the ultimate stereotype of metal misogyny—a naked girl, spread-eagle and on her back, covered in bloody handprints impaled on a guitar neck. On the back of the booklet is what looks like a four-year-old's interpretation of the picture on the front. The music is utterly incompetent grindy hardcore stuff with someone rockin' a Casio SK-5. Gonna hafta to pass on this shit, and I mean that last Saxon word with all the sincerity I can muster. —Jimmy Alvarado (Apop)

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HELPER MONKEYS, THE: Self-titled: CD

Had high hopes for this, and they do deliver in some sectors: catchy hooks and tight musicianship. Ultimately, though, the triple threat it attempts fails to push itself over the top. The post-Ramones veneer and the reliance on the same old rock trappings did it in. —Jimmy Alvarado (Green Door)

HEX DISPENSERS: "My Love Is a Bat" b/w "Cloak and Dagger Complication": 7"

Although this description may sound like ass, I promise it's not: The Marked Men meets the Misfits. Drain any Glenn Danzig delusional weightlifting ego out of the jar, leaving only the beefy, dark melody jiggling around in the glass. Forefront the musical anxiety of the Marked Men—tightly wound guitars and voices that sound on the verge of a breakdown (that you're more than willing to sing along to as they're driving you off a cliff)—and you've got the right mad scientist glasses on when looking at what makes the Hex Dispensers tick. Two more great songs from a band I haven't heard one bad track from yet. One to keep an eye peeled for. This was a tour 7". Five hundred made. —Todd (Plan-It-X South)

HIDDEN SPOTS: Secret Noise: 7" EP

Part of the Chattanooga DIY punk brain trust, The Hidden Spots are an earnest, gruff, smiling, hard-working, deep-thinking force of a band. Think along the line of line cooks who know not only the overwhelming weight of being and how to make excellent things out of

basic ingredients, but also harness the power of being a decent human being. Think along the lines of The Grabass Charlestons and Tim Version; golden statuettes could be made of all these dudes on their day-to-day awesomeness and even smaller golden statuettes should be given them to all of them for making consistently honest, self-examining, self-challenging music in a relative musical vacuum. (Beyond friends, dedicated fans, and family.) I read a lot of music books, and fans of great bands like the Minutemen and The Replacements lament how overlooked they were during their time; how the years have just proven how great the music was, aside from prevailing tastes and big stage novelty, and I can't help but think it's happening in the present tense with these dudes and folks like The Future Virgins. Celebrate this shit now. —Todd (Plan-It-X South)

HOLY SHIT / TURD HUNGRY CHRIST: You Are What You Eat: Split 7" EP

Holy Shit: Spastic hardcore in the tradition of Siege and Charles Bronson. Holy shit, indeed. Turd Hungry Christ: A bit slower, but no less frantic in their delivery. Good stuff all around. —Jimmy Alvarado (Scattered, Smothered and Covered)

HOTCHACHA: Rifle, I Knew You When You Were Just a Pistol: CD

The press stuff says these kids have been together all of a year, but it was apparently a year well spent, judging from the songs here. Four tunes, a

supposed teaser for their upcoming album, and not a stinker in the lot. Heavy art/noise vibe with enough pop thrown into the mix to keep things catchy, a little Sonic Youth here, a little K Records feel there, and a lotta their own vibe over the other parts. Really good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Exit Stencil)

HOUR OF THE WOLF / LEWD ACTS: ST: Split CD

After hearing some of Hour Of The Wolf's previous stuff, I thought they were all bark and no bite. I'm taking this disc as their retort. The first track on this split, "Overload," fakes like it's coming at your leg before leaping at your throat and digging its fangs in. Lyrics express feelings of numbness and pressure as youth fades away. The way these words are sung, however, makes it clear that anger is the real emotion. That emotion fuels the band's remaining two tracks as well. Lewd Acts take over from there, trying valiantly, though futilely, to carry on with the same level of intensity. —MP Johnson (Think Fast)

HUNCHBACK: Pray for Scars: LP

A friend of mine once said "I don't like Hunchback—it's just noise." Sure enough, that's exactly why I like Hunchback (in theory). There're days where I want to listen to something really poppy, or jazz, and sometimes I'm just in the mood for weird, crazy noise. Then again, I can understand Hunchback isn't for everyone. I like that. It's easy to give them a listen and assume that they're just another weird

noise band, but I feel like as chaotic as this record can be at times, everything was planned out to a T (I mean, shit, they tracked down Michael Gerald to sing on this, so they've obviously got a clear vision on just what they want to do). I'm sure this one will make even the biggest weirdo/art punks scratch their head, from the lengthy/black metal-ish (in an atmospheric way, in my opinion) opener, to when the record actually *lightens up* a bit—kind of. Mark my words, Hunchback is a band with a plan, and this record is keeping them on the right track. —Joe Evans III (Don Giovanni)

IDEAL CLEANERS: Muchacho: CDEP

Punk bands who play their instruments well are a double edged sword. Swing it one way and you have bands like the Minutemen and Meat Puppets, weird but cool and grounded. Swing it the other way and you've got the likes of Soundgarden guys who study their abs daily and aspire to bring their hair stylists on tour—maybe a little odd at times—but always striving for commercial success. Read the Ideal Cleaners' one-sheet and they come across like the former. Listen to *Muchacho* and the latter springs to mind. Too glossy for my tastes. —Mike Faloon (Ideal Cleaners, myspace.com/idealcleaners)

IMPULSE INT'L, THE: Arm the Girls: 7"

Straight to the point, this is a great single. I mean a really great single! Both sides are absolute brilliance. Two songs that perfectly illustrate why singles rule.

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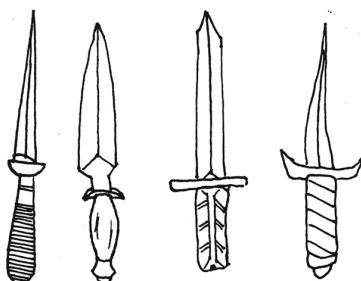
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INCOMMUNICADO: Losing Daylight CD

Wow, these guys actually manage to take a mid-late-'80s DC influence and make it into something worthy of attention. They take many of emo's building blocks and instead churn out twelve songs that are as angry and challenging as they are arty and catchy, and any lameness is either buried or burned off. It literally takes them seven songs to hit a lull in the onslaught, and even by the end of that tune, "Carlos de Inferno," they've started punishing the acoustic guitar they dropped in. Not usually my bag of rocks, but this is something, indeed. —Jimmy Alvarado (A-F)

INNER TERRESTRIALS: X CD

Released in 2004, about half of the album is previously released material like "War" with its ska guitar line, the folk punk "Barry Horne," and thrashy "Off with Their Heads." Their cover of an Ewan Mcoll song, "Movin on Song," is damn fine, too. These U.K. punks spit articulate lyrics on their ideas of anarchy, freedom/oppression, and media. This comp of old and new songs is just enough to whet my appetite

for their new album *Tales of Terror*. —Kristen K (Rodent Popsicle)

INNER TERRESTRIALS: X CD

Well on the downside, these guys are big on the ska punk trip. Their saving grace is that somehow they manage not to sound like total fuckin' ninnies doing either. The lyrics indicate that circle-A ain't merely a fashion trapping; their hardcore, while not blazing MDC-style ranting, is catchy and their use of ska to occasionally throw a wrench in the thrashing (occasionally mid-song) keeps 'em from sounding like so many nth-generation Operation Ivy Xerox bands. While the unfortunate cover of "Guns of Brixton" almost sinks 'em, the work they put in before that tune hits the speakers is more than worthy of attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

INSECT WARFARE / FLAGITIOUS IDIOSYNCRASY IN THE DILAPIDATION: Split EP

Insect Warfare are one of the top grind bands in the U.S. today. However, I hear nothing on this record that makes them worthy of the hype. Run of the mill grind with standard high pitched shrieking followed by the low burping stuff. Despite the ridiculous name, Flagitious Idiosyncrasy In The Dilapidation are a bit better. Three blasts of super thrashing grind with the velocity of hurricane winds, and perhaps as sonically destructive. You'll find this split packaged with *Short Fast & Loud* #19. —M.Avg (Six Weeks)

INSIDE RECESS / EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA: Split CD

It is difficult to listen to grind-like metal with a straight face when it tries too hard. There's a subtle line between fierce and farce, and this pair unintentionally zigzag back and forth across it. Inside Recess juxtapose a spasm of high-pitched screams with gruesomely deep growls, as their music apparently attempts to recreate how a person might react should he or she stumble upon a sleeping black bear, with the following vocals mimicking the now-woken and irritated animal's "grrrruuuuuh." Sometimes, IR sounds pretty all right, but then at others the shtick resembles sound effects for the TV adaptation of *Goosebumps* that were cut for being too ridiculous for kids to actually be scared of. Existential Dilemma is mostly the same, but then they decide to go all soft for a couple of admittedly intriguing instrumental tracks. But have no fear, because the action picks back up quickly enough with a *very metal* track that I affectionately refer to as "Opening Theme to a *Count Duckula* Marathon." What's the point to this kind of metal when it makes you think about how silly it is instead of forcing you to thrash your neck? —Reyan Ali (Self-released)

JEAN MILLS SOCIETY TORCH: Start Tomorrow: 7"

It's no surprise that this band contains ex-members of The Spark. The songs are well-constructed, angry, blasts of floor-moving fastcore. These guys have been in so many bands and know how

to do this so well that, at times, it feels like they're just toying with the genre; pulling its strings like a marionette to orchestrate what ever they want to hear. But goddamn, even if at times it seems a little played-out, it totally rages. —Daryl (Firestarter)

KUNG-FU MONKEYS, THE: Christmas for Breakfast CD

What would you get if you combined Lucky Charms, Trix, Froot Loops, and Corn Pops? Can you even imagine the musical equivalent of this tantalizing combination of sugary goodness? Ladies and gentlemen, it is rare that I am called upon to say this, but: I WOULD STOP EATING LUCKY CHARMS FOR ONE MONTH IF FAILURE TO DO SO MEANT THAT I COULD NOT LISTEN TO THIS CD TEN TIMES PER DAY! Yes, I am that serious! The Kung-Fu Monkeys exist at the intersection of Ramones Blvd. and Herman's Hermits Way! And close by, you'll find the Beach Boys cul-de-sac! This CD compiles over forty songs from out-of-print seven-inches, comps, and more! It features at least THREE of the best pop punk songs of all time: "Let's Go (to Pasadena to Meet Your Parents)," "Thermos," and "I Miss the Ramones!" When I got this CD in the mail, I actually did a dance around my apartment! Yes, I am that dumb! And I'm in love with the Kung-Fu Monkeys! —Maddy (Whoa Oh)

LAUDANUM: Self-titled: 7"

One of those records that sounds pretty good at either speed. I prefer this at 33

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RPM, which makes it more doom-ish, and dark. However, I believe this was meant to be played at 45 RPM. Just as well... Metal with that certain heaviness Bay Area bands can conjure. "Invoke" is a mid-tempo number with a swinging rhythm, despite the—well—doom tone that dominates the song. The atmospheric/ambient noise gives this an even more sinister tone. "Warlord" is a bit faster and thunderous. Great record all the way through. Comes on white vinyl, in case you were wondering.—M.Avg (Pyrate Pux)

LITTLE GIRLS: *The Clear Album: 7" EP*

The Little Girls were a bit of surfy, poppy fluff that managed to score both a regional hit ("The Earthquake Song," which can be found on the *Rodney on the Roq Volume 2* compilation) and a video in then-new MTV's rotation before being lost to time. This 45 is their second "album," of which twenty clear copies (hence the title) were originally made, featuring three tunes in much the same innocuous pop mold as their previous endeavors. I'm actually old enough to remember "Not a Perfect World" being played on the radio (maybe Rodney was trying to help push it along or something) and they ain't bad tunes, especially if you dig that safe teen pop sound of yore.—Jimmy Alvarado (Ramo)

LIVING WRECKS, THE: *Get Wrecked: CD EP*

Five-song studio effort that lays the pipe for their full length, due this

summer. I'm hearing Johnny Thunders, Dead Boys, and some Damned in the equation. "Love You Dead" is a great song. There is also a Pagans' cover here. I predict this band will only get better over time. They seem to be playing like madmen on the East Coast, so catch 'em live tomorrow. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

LOSER LIFE: *My Hell: 12" EP*

I recently got to see this band live and even though the singer had to sing without a mic for half the set, it was still abrasive in all the right ways. This band reminds me of an awkward, lonely kid who turns bully, but instead of bullying other defenseless, awkward kids, he turns his anger on those who deserve it. It's frightening in that way. It's also inspiring and motivating. Once you've processed that feeling, imagine it seeping out of your speakers in the form of hardcore that's a strange but gratifying mix of Pegboy, Hüsker Dü, and Crucifix, and you'll understand why people have been making a big deal about this band.—Daryl (Life's A Rape)

LURKERS, THE: *Fried Brains: CD*

I keep hearing a lotta talk about how this is a return to their roots and sounds just like *Fulham Fallout*. Sorry to burst a few bubbles, but it don't, kids. That album is thirty-odd years old now and for them to go back and try to ape that Lurkers would be disingenuous and absolute folly. Swear to Mahfu, for such a supposed forward-looking lot, punkers sure spend a lotta time

pining for the days "when punk was punk." It's 2008, not 1977, so get with the program, dammit. Okay, so we've established what this isn't, so let's now establish what it is: a mighty fine punk rock album circa 2008, and quite possibly one of the best contemporary albums in the Captain Oi stable. While there are abundant hints of the Lurkers of yore in evidence, they've also added some sophistication to their Ramonesy roots while retaining copious amounts of humor and much thud. It even sounds a little like TSOL's more recent efforts in some places, which is no faint praise. While on the first song they may be inviting you to "Come and Reminisce," they ain't exactly dishing up helpings of stale shit cooked three decades back.—Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

MAE SHI, THE: *Hillyh: CD*

Wow. I knew this album was going to be a good one when the first track scared the shit out of my dog. As she retreated to the quiet of another room, I was glued to my seat in front of the speakers, waiting to see what was going to happen next. It is very seldom that I feel this way about a band with electronic elements, but The Mae Shi combine their electronic beats and sounds with fantastic organic elements like handclaps and layered vocals. The end result is fantastically energetic rock'n'roll that is both catchy and unpredictable. And I'm willing to bet they kick ass live. —Jennifer Whiteford (Team Shi, www.mae-shi.com)

MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE, THE: *OK Smarty Pants: CD*

Yay! Poppy punk (as opposed to actual pop punk! Ah, the semantics!) with political lyrics! From DC, but it doesn't sound like Fugazi! Decent stuff! If it were a cereal, it'd be Apple Jacks! There's the serious gesture ("Yes, we will work some fruit into this sugary meal, if only by adding it to the name of this cereal!") and the poppy sensibilities! Yum! —Maddy (Plan-it-X)

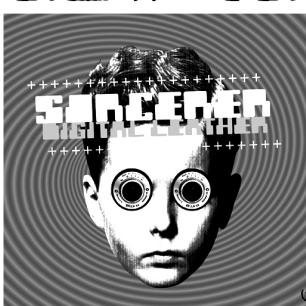
MEAN STREETS: *That Day: 7"*

This record just might be the perfect package. First of all, I love seven inch singles. My favorite format. CHECK! Musically, Mean Streets come off sounding like something in the vein of The Belmonts which is more than fine by me. The vocals are a little thinner though, but it took me all of a verse in the first song to get used to it. Both tunes are catchy and made me want to move. CHECK! This single is absolutely beautiful to look at. The cover art is all done in black, white and various shades of blue. There is none of the usual "tough guy street rock" trappings that a lot of bands in this genre fall into. Best of all, the slab of vinyl itself just might be the coolest wax I've ever seen. A marble of black and deep blue with white spattered throughout. CHECK! I think I'll have to keep an ear out for more from these guys. —Ty Stranglehold (Longshot)

MEASURE [SA]: *Means to an End: 7" EP*

"Musical relationships" are tough. I consider members of The Measure

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[SA] my friends. And that's purely from being a fan of their music in the DIY world, where we talk to each other and share stuff over the years. But I'm also a listener/critic who'll tell someone I like who hands me a piece of music they made to review, "Dude, all I can give is my honest opinion. I may not like it." And said opinion has strained and ended some friendships. It can be a horrible place to be in. It can also make one realize, "I have talented friends and it's great to hear them challenge themselves." And so it is with The Measure [SA]. I do believe I'm reviewing their seventh release, and they've still got my ear. The crib notes are that they're a female-voice-lead punk band: melodic, romantic, and thoughtful. The surprise is in the song, "Oslo," where they take a part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Nobel Prize acceptance speech and make it a rollicking song all their own. Excellent. —Todd (Salinas)

MEISCE: Shipwrecked in a Bottle: CD

This is perfectly all right Irish-influenced folk punk that basically sounds like *Rum Sodomy and the Lash*. I just get the feeling that the genre of Irish-influenced punk bands is pretty over-saturated and drowning in cliché at this point. It feels like the formula for writing these records is to make eighty percent of the songs about drinking, and then a song about working to death or about being heartbroken by a fair lass (and the need to drink because of it). I, for one, really

have to question what a band of punk rockers from Seattle would know about the working in an Irish coal mine (see the song "Ghost of the Coal Mine"). It seems that there's so many other types of folk and traditional music in the world that could be turned into great punk rock that are never touched, that it's just boring to have another band of Americans sing about how great Ireland and being Irish is. For instance, when was the last time that anyone heard a good norteño or klezmer punk band? I think bands like Gogol Bordello, World/Inferno, and Kultur Shock have the right idea, which is that you should combine traditional and punk influences to make something new and exciting, and not just ape convention and keep rewriting the Pogues' song book. I guess it's unfair of me to dump this complaining into Meisce's review, as the album is fun and all, but at the same time, come on guys, could you really have got more stereotypical than writing a song about the drunkest man in 1819 Ireland? —Adrian (Fistolo)

MELVINS: Nude with Boots: CD

"Wake up! C'mon!" The Melvins' latest is one of the best. Along with the characteristic strangeness, humorous/profound nonsense, and plodding, fuzzed-out heaviness that define Melvins' sound, there are a few tracks here that have definite mass-appeal potential. In simpler terms, this album fucking jams, Melvins' sound very Melviny, and the rest of the rock-loving world just might get it. A few numbers

on this eleven-song release revive and redefine the vivacious energy and sound of hard, classic '70s rock, while the others meander faithfully through the erratically-creative, vast, and often creepy mindspace of guitarist/vocalist Buzz Osborne. Track one, "The Kicking Machine" sounds as if Led Zeppelin tried to sound like Melvins. (not the other way around.) That rockin' tune has uber-infectious and punctuating Jimmy Page-like guitar riffs, John Bonham-like drum beats and fills...all with BIG, important-sounding delivery. It's BIG because the band continues on with Big Business members Jared Warren on bass and Coady Willis drumming alongside (almost) founding member Dale Crover. Some of the material is dark and cacophonous such as the Alice Cooper-ish "The Savage Hippy" and downright nightmarish like "It Tastes Better than the Truth" and "Dies Aerea." But it's the straight-on, rock-hard '70s influenced tunes like "Billy Fish" and "Suicide in Progress" that will keep most listeners hitting the replay button. Sehr gut! —Marcus Solomon (Ipsecac)

MICROTIA: Distance Is Oval: CD

Evidently the band really wants people to know that their sound is what would happen if hardcore kids started smoking pot and listening to Led Zeppelin. Actually, I think there's a number of them who already do that and don't sound anything like this. Sometimes I hear a bit of the Deftones

and there's more of a melodic sound than a hard sound, that's for sure. The primary fault of Microtia is the vocalist's singing just doesn't seem to match up well with the music. It seems a bit weak. I'd be interested in hearing the band hit the music part a bit harder and really bring out some power in the mix with a different singer. If they keep the vocalist, they should tone it down and have it be part of a style in which his vocals make for a better fit. —Kurt Morris (Exigent, www.myspace.com/exigentrecords)

MOME RATHS, THE: Vaporized My Brain: CD

So I put this on, and I'm immediately stuck with the task of trying to figure out why a band with enough good sense to go by an obscure word culled from a poem in a Lewis Carroll work would be responsible for such a lackluster quasi-punk record with some pretty lame lyrics. I listen to it again and scrutinize the lyric sheet, looking for some kind of clue. Then I see it, staring out from the "thank you" section: "Daniel thanks: My Lord & Savior Jesus Christ for His gift of grace and allowing me to have fun with the talent He has given me." Ah, okay: Jesus-philes. Now I get the Carroll reference. True to form, right below Daniel's name-checking His Hol(e)y-Handedness, Tracy gives her proper to the same, but also interestingly starts off with the following: "Tracy thanks: My wonderful husband, thank you for all your support in everything,

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for your love & encouragement & *for all the talent God has given you*" (italics mine). Wha-? Was there no talent left for Jesus to bestow on her after heaping a double helping on her hubby? Is he lending her a little via some sorta talent transubstantiation so that she can play bass? Naturally, with all this talk of "talent," I started to wonder where all this talent was manifesting itself, 'cause it sure ain't in evidence here. Maybe he built a sturdy platypus-shaped house out of pretzels, or developed a way to extract turnip atoms to cure that little hole in John Travolta's chin. Maybe it can be found in the name of the band itself, 'cause now that I know the Late JC is all up in the mix I find myself thinking back to Maddy's Mormon article a few issues back and I'm wondering if it ain't a thinly disguised "Mormon Wraths" reference that wasn't readily apparent before. Yeah, maybe that's it. Maybe they're really a buncha Mormons operatives egged on to exact a little revenge on the decent folk of Razorcake because they don't like their silliness being outed in such a fine, well read periodical. A POX ON YOUR CHEERIOS, MADDY TIGHT PANTS, FOR BRINGING THIS ACCURSED SCOURGE OF LOUSY JESUS-LED PUNK UPON THE HOUSE OF 'CAKE (followed quickly by a heartfelt secret okey-doke hand sign for being such a damned [pun intended] funny writer)!!! Uh, excuse me as I beeline to my room to put on my Brigham Young Underoos, making sure to bury this disc in the basura as I dash past, demand from my wife her own

immense talent via the aforementioned talent transubstantiation so that I have a heaping helping of genius to call my own and discover the cure for brain freezes. Let's hope these little efforts will allay any further attacks headed this way from the backwaters of Utah. —Jimmy Alvarado (themeraths@hotmail.com)

MOTHER SPEED: Demo: CD-R

Does every hardcore thrash band worship Infest or is just me? Not that it means these guys are bad musicians or anything. In fact, their drummer is amazing. The music just doesn't do much for me. The best part about this CD is that they have a song called "Altered Beast," which is about a video game that dominated my childhood. Just for that, D.—Bryan Static (Self-released)

MOUTHBREATHER:

Thank You for Your Patience: CD

Named after a Jesus Lizard song (always an excellent thing), Richmond, VA's Mouthbreather deliver earnestly aggressive punk laced with an anxious hue of raw early '90s emo. In light of the album's relatively unrefined production, the sound is remarkably accessible, and the vocals have a cool effect that makes them sound like they are being sung by two singers simultaneously. However, this makes the words surprisingly lucid, which is awesome when the lyrics are so deftly written. You will be chanting "Back to the abyss, back to the abyss!" in no time. —Reyan Ali (Tick Tock/Kiss of Death)

MR. PLOW: *Apocalypse Plow*: CD

Mr. Plow is back with his rude, crude, laugh-out-loud songs. This one is a little different though. Instead of the solo acoustic thing, Plow has got himself a band. This isn't just any band either. It's chock full of celebrities, including metal drum god Gene Hoglan, Rocky George (ex-Suicidal Tendencies), Oderus and Flattus (GWAR), Angelo Moore (Fishbone), Mr. Chi Pig (SNFU) and plenty more... If you know what Plow is all about, then you know what to expect: dirty songs about farting, tits, handjobs, and food. This time out, it's more of a traveling folk band kind of feel. I like it, but I think I prefer the solo act myself. Worth grabbing. —Ty Stranglehold (Crusty)

NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH: *Barbi in Bondage*: 7" EP

Okay, no bullshit, "Barbi in Bondage" is easily one of the greatest punk songs of the past ten years, if not of all time—obnoxious, raw, rude, and funny. The remaining tracks on this reissue—"Mini-Van Soccer Mom," "My Neighbor Hates Me" and a version of the Ramones' "Havana Affair" are just as swell, which means that if you manage to get your grubby little paws on one of these (only 1,000 of 'em making the rounds, of those only 500 on colored vinyl), it'll be well worth the effort and the money you spent to acquire a copy. Bless the good Doctor for having the sense to put this back in circulation. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

NO USE FOR A NAME: *The Feel Good Record of the Year*: CD

Wow! This band has been around now for over twenty years? That is a rarity. Not sure how many releases this band has put out, but it has to be a lot. I believe the longevity of the band is their talent to write songs that are catchy. Either being fast or mid-tempo, the songs have a memorable quality that is pleasing to the ear. Sonically, this is one of their best recorded albums due to it being recorded at the Blasting Room by Bill Stevenson and Jason Livermore. They have been responsible for many recordings that I like from this genre. If you throw out band names to describe a good pop punk, melodicore band, NUFAN is a band that has to be included in that list. They consistently have been putting out music that has matured through the years, but they never forget the formula that put them on the map. Longtime fans will not even need to read a review to make them purchase this release. —Donofthedead (Fat)

OKMONIKS, THE: *Party Fever!!!*: CD

My middle-time memory is awful. I'll say stuff like, "A couple years back," when it was over five, over a decade. The Okmoniks remind me of the best of Crypt and Estrus Records—bands that simultaneously plunged a direct heart shunt into the first beatings of rock'n'roll, yet didn't fully ignore the ever-evolving now. You get a comforting bit of nostalgia in a nice, attitude-filled wrapper, so it didn't seem like you were merely raiding musical mausoleums, but



stumbling onto something undiscovered, cool, and not past its expiration date. Channeling the spirit of the Devil Dogs, Mummies, and the Trashwomen, the Okmoniks Farfisa-jump right into good company. Except much of that company stopped making music over a decade ago. I'm a sucker for this. If technology gets to the point where you can download songs and that activates a pizza being delivered to your door at the same time, man, that's about the only thing I could think of that'd make this record even better. Crank it. —Todd (Slovenly)

PAPERDOLLS:

The Question Is, What Color?: CD

This album got on my nerves a bit right from the beginning, given that the vocals don't begin until halfway through the first song and overall the production is pretty shoddy (and not in a good bootleggy kind of way). The vocals are kind of buried under acoustic guitars for the entire CD. Both vocalists (male and female) have good voices, but when they sing in unison it just doesn't sound smooth or compelling. More like two strangers who happen to know the same song at a campfire than two people in a band together. This album takes itself too seriously to be fun, but the talent isn't there to make the brooding worth it. —Jennifer Whiteford (*Incest*, www.patchestforholes.com)

PAYOUT, THE:

Riders of the Dead Horse: CD

Musically, Birmingham's The Payout brings together a bunch of post-punk and hardcore influences, with the overly whiny

vocals making the already odd songs even less accessible. Fans of artier strains of hardcore will appreciate the undeniable creativity, whereas the rest of us would probably rather attend a scrapbooking or papier-mâché party to get our creative fix. Does anyone know what time the fabric store closes? —Art Ettinger (*House of Love*, www.houseoflovere cords.net)

PEDESTRIANS: *Killing Season: 7" EP*

Mid-paced, blunt punk thud that knows exactly what it's doing and how to do it. Ulcerated vocals, slicey guitars, steam roller bass, cement mixer drums. It's almost like The Pedestrians are construction workers, maintaining the structural integrity of certain DIY punk onramp, making sure everyone can get on board as easily and safely as possible, which is usually tough, thankless work. (When's the last time you high fived a freeway worker?) Looking at it another way, The Pedestrians are making their own small, pragmatic monuments that are hooked into a much larger, worldwide system. Effective. —Todd (Residue)

PIZZAS, THE: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

These guys have been keeping up with the Rip Off Records catalog, and it shows. Three tunes here, all in that trashy punk vein that seems to be such hot shit up there in Northern California. They ain't too bad at it, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Daggerman)

POPULATION REDUCTION:

Each Birth a New Disaster: LP

If you haven't heard the magic of this

guitar and drums duo in person or on recording and you are a fan of metal, grind, death and such, you are missing out. This is the band's first full-length, showcasing their brand of death metal, grindcore, and thrash attack which continues on the greatness of their *At the Throats of Man Forever EP* that came out a year or two back. Heavy riffs, blast beats, and everything in between are thrown out at you. There is no lack of heaviness and speed from these two men from the Bay area. The music will make you bang your head, mosh, slam, and, for stoner types, maybe smoke one. It makes you feel like they are taking you for a ride; first going slow, then fast, and finally even faster, about to crash but still in control. Interested yet? But on top of all that, they have humor. Make fun of the Amish? Old people? SUV owners? Black metal fans? All of the above. They don't seem to narrow themselves to what topics they cover in their lyrics. Overall, this LP has shown me how much I really do like this band. After seeing them live and hearing them recorded before, they surely raised the bar on this one. —Donofthedead (Tankcrimes)

PRETTY BOY THORSON AND THE F'N A'S: *Take It Easy: CD*

You gotta hand it to any music that can comfort you in your sorrow and invigorate you in your merriment. *Take It Easy* is the ultimate fall back album for those diagnosed with manic depression. It's also great for parties, alone time, and road trips. Not many albums can say that. —Daryl (ADD)

PROLETARIAN ART THREAT:

The Long Process of Quitting: CD

This is the discography of the Cleveland, Ohio, band. This band does frantic rock'n'roll with sort of off-kilter sensibilities that lands it right in between The Bronx and Drive Like Jehu. This is pretty great stuff that probably would have been right at home on Amphetamine Reptile or '90s-era Touch and Go. There's a mix of studio and live recordings on this CD, which I had reservations about at first, but, amazingly, the live stuff actually sounds good. The band had two singers over the course of its three years, and I have to say that the first half of the CD is the stronger half, because first singer Jack Shit really gave the band an extra manic edge over later singer Stephie. This album (especially the first half) is my favorite of the current review batch, especially after spending a little time with it so that I could pick through the franticness and noisy diversions in it, like the odd noise jam/spoken word song "Dub Arrest." —Adrian (Shandi Records and Tapes)

PROSTHETICS, THE: *Count It: 7"*

When things started swirling around the global drain at the dawn of the Bush Regime, I was among those who thought that, at the very least, we'd get some great searing, political hardcore records coming out a la the early days of Reagan. Well, in the last eight (?) years, nothing has really blown my mind on that front until now. Upon slapping The Prosthetics' EP on the turntable I

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was taken back to an angry time in my youth. The music is simple yet brutally hard. No chugga-chugga metal here, just hardcore in the truest sense of the word. The lyrics aren't growled; they're very clear and delivered in a tone that is dripping with an urgency that more of us should be instilled with. The cover art is a black and white drawing of their local crooked sheriff getting curb stomped. This is the real deal here, people. I want more! —Ty Stranglehold (Organized Crime)

PROTESTANT:

The Hate. The Hollow: LP

Okay, right off the bat, lemme just say that the vinyl—sorta plum colored with a neat design marbled into it—is fuckin' gorgeous. The music is heavy, fast, and pissed-off hardcore that sounds like they have more than a passing interest in some of the more rambunctious hardcore bands coming out of Scandinavia. Nine tunes total, and totally worth your time. —Jimmy Alvarado (Halo of Flies)

RAGER: Feculent Emesis: 7"

A witty, co-ed, power-thrash band is a dangerous weapon in my mind. If the people of the world shared my brain, Rager would be appointed to the position of all-things-awesome. But let's be serious for a moment—if the idea of a politically charged, church-hating, smart band that can bring the crucial, often melodic, female and male vocationed, thrashin' hardcore punk makes your day; Rager is the 7" to go with. —Daryl (Hewhocorrupts, Inc.)

RESTARTS: Outsider: CD

Okay, right off the bat, the opener, "Outsider," had me singing along. It is about as good a punk rock anthem as I've heard in a while. My attention's all theirs. As soon as the ska riffage introduced itself, however, I immediately checked out, only to be lured back in when they went back to the thrashin' and yellin'. Truth be told, their ska punk here ain't as miserable as some I've heard, even on their previous releases, but a virtual zero tolerance policy is in place when it comes to that stuff, so much time was spent skipping to the next track. All told, a good chunk of this was faboo, and the remainder was Operation Ivy-culled chaff they neglected to slough off. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

RHINO-39: Self-titled: 2 x CD

As a certified non-West-Coast-grower-upper, the totality of my Rhino-39 knowledge was obtained from four discrete sources: 1. Their song on the *Hell Comes To Your House* compilation; 2. Their song on the *American Youth Report* compilation; 3. Their name being plastered across miscellaneous flyers which I had managed to inveigle from kindred West-Coast-grower-uppers; and 4. The fine print on the sides of various commercial aerosol disinfectant cans. It is perhaps not a mark in the band's favor that the thing that always struck me as the most interesting thing about them was that they named themselves after a germ with a cool name ((and, if you think about *that* for a while, shouldn't

most of the resultant Cool Points™ be awarded to the germ itself, not the band who merely hitched their wagons to that germ's mighty star?)). Based on the two songs of theirs that I knew, I always sort of thought that they were kind of in with the less weighty elements of the SST/New Alliance crowd ((i.e., perhaps they didn't completely hate jazz- and art-rock, and wouldn't sound out of place on a record with Raymond Pettibon cover art)). However, now that my square-ass ass has been set hip to their initial three-song Dangerhouse release, it is apparent that I was completely oblivious to their status as early entrants in the "first ever hardcore band, maybe" sweepstakes, which, in any rational nut's taxonomy, puts them more in line with Middle Class, than, say, Saccharine Trust or Overkill ((what's also amazing is how much the chord progression in "Prolixin Stomp" sounds like that last song on the first Leg Hounds CD, which technically makes Rhino-39 the earliest known Devil Dogs clones—so early on the bandwagon, in fact, as to predate the formation of the band by whom they were influenced by well over a decade. Now THAT'S early adoption!)). Further, the band's ratty little breakneck guitar solo in "Xerox 12" reminds me of Tommy Hawk's zany thrash-pop fretboard butchering from the early stages of Cleveland's Offbeats ((whose existence was still a good three years away at the time of "Xerox 12"'s recording)), and even the occasional goofy keyboard solos herein might have predated the similar spaz-

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their record over the top of it. Doi. —Rev. Norb (Nickel and Dime)

RIBZY: Self-titled: 7" EP

Jeez, I dunno if these SanJo legends are back together or they're just trying to purge their archives, but it's nice to have some "new" music from 'em. The A-side is comprised of three tunes apparently recorded for a San Jose punk reunion show, the B-side has some circa-2006 recordings of older tunes that weren't included on the retrospective CD that came out a few years ago. All of it is, of course, gloriously obnoxious in a way that is often rare in these times of punk-as-career-move. Good to hear more from 'em and here's hoping more is in the works. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vinehell)

ROD MITCHELL: Cheesecake: CD

Musical comedy is a tough row to hoe and Rod Mitchell is swerving all over that field with reckless abandon. One song sounds like he's swiped Eddie Van Halen's "1984" keyboard and strapped it to a Weird Al song, while another sounds like a cut from the children's record Robyn Hitchcock never wrote. There are humorous bits here and there—"The Dying Squirrel" is cruel but funny—but *Cheesecake* needs a concept to justify putting the lyrical horse before the musical cart and make the trip worthwhile. —Mike Faloon (Orange Knight)

RUNNING FOR COVER: Dark Well: LP

Defunct Buffalo, NY, powerviolence band from recent years who sound like

they existed in the West Bay circa 1995: MITB mixed with Spazz and ran through a blender at lightning speed. They throw in some quirky guitar squonking here and there to keep it interesting, and the instrumental at the end is totally out of left field, but it's good to hear a band take risks in a codified genre. Good stuff all around. Too bad they called it a day. —M.Avg (625 / Unholy Thrash / Art Of The Underground)

SASS DRAGONS: Bonkaro!: CD

I don't like getting caught up with labels. It seems like too many people get caught up in having, "Well, I'm only into [insert whatever little sub-scene/genre here]" attitudes. What's great about this record is that the Sass Dragons are clearly not those kind of dudes. At its core, this plays like a crass pop punk record, in the sense that it's catchy as hell, and switches the ever popular "why don't girls like me" sentiment with "I WANNA TOUCH YOUR BOOBS, GIRL" approach, which make me crack up while bobbing my head as I listen. But here's the clincher: these guys are good musicians—like, *really* good. They know what they're capable of, and come up with some really creative stuff (like the blues number). Dare I say; I think if The Dwarves did that last album of theirs with the main collaborators being The Beatles (both remaining and non), the output would sound like this. And it sounds great. —Joe Evans III (Johann's Face/Let's Pretend)

SASS DRAGONS: Bonkaro!: CD

The "kitchen sink" approach to punk has been the death knoll of many a band. "Endless experimentation" gets tedious because it seems like the band is testing the waters of musical escape routes. (Lesser Fishbone and Bad Brains records come to mind.) Sometimes, you just want to be rocked instead of diddled by a wet noodle in your ear. (I'm all for "experimentation.") Just do it without hitting record. Hit record when the experiment was a success.) Yet, with the Sass Dragons, they're all over the fuckin' place—from sounding like Weezer and The Dwarves simultaneously in the same song, to a track that sounds like an STD'd *Sesame Street* stoop jam—and it works. Much like The Weird Lovemakers (seek out *Electric Clump* and *Back 20* for more evidence) could go from straight-ahead scorches to ranchero to Doo Wop without losing momentum, the Sass Dragons have hot glued and belt fought something into submission that could have been a big, fuckin' stupendous mess into a fuckin' glorious mess. (With a staunch anti-Alan Thicke message.) Lesser bands, just listen and enjoy. Don't try to copy 'em, because you'll sound like dill weeds diarrheeing into your fans' ears. Awesome in the original biblical sense, not the Kirk Cameron, just-found-god sense. —Todd (Johann's Face/Let's Pretend)

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Meat Puppets guests. —Mike Faloon (Wee Rock)

SHOOT IT UP: Self-titled: 7" EP

Sloppy punk stuff with enough snottiness pumped into what they're doing to keep 'em interesting. What seals the deal, though, is they manage to cover of the Consumers' "Teen Love Song" without looking like total ninnies. No easy feat, my friends. —Jimmy Alvarado (Criminal IQ)

SHORT CHANGED:

Burn Down Wagon Town: 7"

I can smell the stale beer and garlicky body odor in the air when this record is on. East Bay punk (not pop!) that moves at a moderately fast pace. Nothing really stands out about the music though. It's just "there." Plus the vocals, main and back up, sound a bit tired, or uninspired. Ehhhhh... Nice split green and gray vinyl though. —M.Avg (Goat Power Recreation / Pyrate Punx)

SHOTWELL: Patriot: LP

Recently I made my first visit to San Francisco's Thrillhouse Records, which I discovered to be totally awesome in every aspect. While I was there, I picked up some great 7"s from the bins and Thrillhouse's most recent release, Shotwell's *Patriot*. This is a release that the band, the label, and the city should be proud of. Like a more positive Onion Flavored Rings, or more subdued Tulsa, Shotwell's music has embodied the SF scene for many a release. With those crisp but warm guitar tones and

the perfect combination of optimism, skepticism, and probably some other -isms, this LP is an obvious win for fans of the bands mentioned above, long-running Bay Area zines, and DIY anything. —Daryl (Thrillhouse)

SHYBOY / CRUMP, THE: Split: 7"

It's been well established that everything from Japan is pretty awesome, right? So when I realized this was on Snuffy Smiles, I was pretty stoked for it, even though I've never heard of either of these bands. Shyboy: To me they sounded like if Social Distortion were good. Did I just say that? Yeah, I did. The Crump: They sounded like One Man Army, if they were better. Japan: Taking things from America and making them sound better, since for a long time now. —Joe Evans III (Snuffy Smiles)

SINGULARS, THE:

Pet Sounds (for Alexia): 2x7"

Fucking awesome. This is comic gold. Pure comedic genious. With lyrics like "I can't find my dick in this shit in my pants at the dog park" and a song about fucking a pastry, how could I not laugh? (Well, I guess I could "grow up.") The music that accompanies these irreverent lyrics sounds somewhere between a group of people coincidentally banging out patterns on their instruments and songs written five minutes before they were recorded. There's even a track that has some semblance of a rap song. Though I really enjoy listening to this myself, I think that the greatest

joy I get from these couple of 7"s is the thought of trapping somebody in a room and making him or her listen to this clusterfuck over and over. I'm filing this one under *schadenfreude*. —Vincent (Self-released?)

SOMETHING'S WRONG / SHOREBIRDS: Split 7"

Two songs. One per each side. Each a mini-epic. Something's Wrong: "See You Never" is a long distance love song, full of train yards, backs to dumpsters, and buses; a DIY punk "Fairytale of New York" with a more ambiguous, less "you killed both me and my dreams" ending. If you're a sucker for stabbed-speaker, ragged-voice singing akin to Allergic To Bullshit, and the great male/female voice interplay of The Measure [SA] as I am, this song's a treat. Great stuff. Shorebirds: Restraint is a funny thing. Too much restraint and the train never gets out of the station and people start looking at their shoes, wishing you'd just leave. But if the train has a rocket attached, too much, too soon, then you get a two-word situation that starts with "premature" and ends with a noun of disappointment. The Shorebirds squeeze that restraint in "The Movie's Almost Over" like a huge grapefruit. You know it's gonna burst because the fingertips are penetrating the flesh. Wait for it. Squeeze harder. A little mist as the rind's giving out. Then splow! Seeds, pulp, juice everywhere, the sky crashes, and then spent silence. In one song. Via early '90s East Bay pop punk

music lexicon, but very much using present time and experience. Excellent. —Todd (Rumbletowne / Cookout)

STAJNAS LOBOS / VACANT CHURCHES: ST: Split 7"

This split features two very like-minded bands. Both use horror imagery as a jumping off point to comment on modern culture. Stajnas Lobos opens with "The Hammer," in which they draw school shootings in the form of slasher films, all blood-soaked and focused on the killer. The shaky vocals keep you off balance as you watch the events unfold and even begin to understand the murderer's point of view. In "Wake up the Dead," Vacant Churches paint a post-apocalyptic scene of "meathead monsters and plastic ladies." The keyboards pick at your nerves until you realize the scene isn't post-apocalyptic at all. This is a good example of how strong the split 7" format can be. —MP Johnson (Vinehell)

STATE OF THE UNION:

To the Bitter End... A Discography: CD

The nineties were a peculiar time in music, and most certainly in what embodied the punk scene of that era. State Of The Union were/are of that time. It made sense then, but now it's a bit foreign. Musically, they were akin to math metal, somewhere in the world of bands like Ambush, Damnation A.D., and Neurosis, though not as urgent or heavy. These guys weren't bad, but, at the same time, there was nothing in their music that made them entirely memorable. On this disc you get their LP, two EPs, and

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five new songs (meant for an LP in 2000).
—M.Avrg (Profane Existence)

STATUES: *Broken Hands: 7" EP*

Much like I inadvertently learned quite a bit about the day-to-day working class Britain from listening to Jam songs over and over again, Statues are power popping me through a short history of middle class troubles of modern day Canada. It works on two levels. 1.) The music is airtight, happy, bright, and bouncy—all hallmarks of great power pop. 2.) The lyrics belie some grave misgivings they have of their lot in life and the songs themselves work as both temporary salve and, hopefully, the antidote. It's that unresolved tension and a Pointed Sticks cover that make this a great 7". —Todd (Plastic Idol)

STEINWAYS, THE / VARSITY WEIRDOS: *Split 7"*

The Steinways come forth with one of their best songs ever on this split with the Varsity Weirdos that was put out as a limited release intended to go out as thank you gifts to those who made it out to Adam and Jenna Alive's wedding in 2007. Super cute layout work by Stefan of Stardumb records, too! Only 150 or so of these were made, so if you absolutely need to hear this, I might be willing to rip it and send it your way... for a price. —Mr. Z (It's Alive)

SUB CITY DWELLERS:

When the Beat Starts to Pound: CD

Ska, punk, and dub with a pinch of jazz is what this brings to mind. Only

thing I can't get into is the voice that sounds a bit like Op Ivy's Lint and the slow tempos. It's not bad at all, but this reviewer would much rather be listening to Streetlight Manifesto's take on this genre. —Mr. Z (Longshot)

SUPPRESSION: *Amputated Brain Stem: 1993 - 2000 Discography: CD*

F'ing brutal and uglier than all hell. Suppression were one of the better bands of the first wave of powerviolence. Sounding like a mix of Crossed Out and Man Is The Bastard, their songs were fast, heavy, and noisy. The sonic equivalent of being stabbed in the head with screwdrivers by a gang of thugs. Merciless in their approach, their attack is bass heavy and blown out with bursts of noise that works its way into your ear canal then chews through your brain to the other side. Sixty-four tracks in all, this single disc collects all their EPs, split EPs, and LPs and comp tracks. Most of the material holds up well, and anyone remotely interested in powerviolence should pick this up. —M.Avrg (C.N.P.)

SWORD, THE: *Gods of the Earth: CD*

This is pure fuggin' godhead! Heavy metal as it is meant to be played. Definite nods to Pentagram and the "New Wave of British Heavy Metal," but fresher than most bands attempting similar sounds today. The Sword's debut album, *Age of Winters*, is flawless and continues to log the miles on my disc player. I didn't think it possible for a follow up to be on the same level, and yet *Gods of the Earth* is its equal. Every

song is spot on, tightly structured, and executed with white knuckled intensity. Massive wall of guitar with a heavy drum sound that literally pummels. The pacing of the songs must be commended as well. There's a beginning, a middle, and an end. A true album and not just a random collection of songs to fill up time around a couple good tracks. There is no filler on this. Pure gold the whole way through. —M.Avrg (Kemado)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET: *Warning Device: CD*

A warning about *Warning Device*. If you didn't like Teenage Bottlerocket's debut album *Total*, you might as well skip this one. If you're a big fan, however, this CD will deliver what you'd expect from these guys. While they, again, do not reinvent the wheel, their new songs are a bit more fleshed out and just as catchy as ever, and the drums on this recording sound phenomenal. And, almost as a given, Cody's songs are sing-along wonders that deserve the repeat button to be pressed. —Mr. Z (Redscape, Redscape.net)

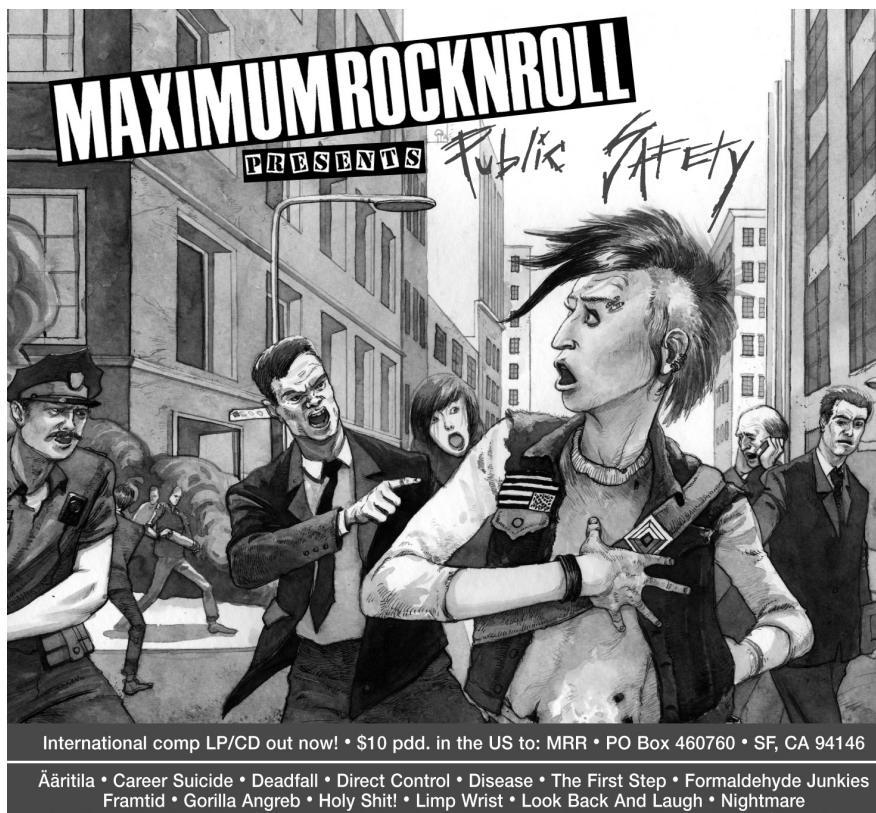
TEENAGE HEAD: *With Marky Ramone: CD*

I'm not sure if many of you outside of Canada were aware that Teenage Head is alive and kicking. It's true, Canada's Ramones are out there on the road and have now done a record of all their classic songs with Marky Ramone hitting the skins. I've got to say right off the top that I'm truly surprised at how good this sounds. I don't mean that in a bad way

at all. I've seen Teenage Head within the last year get on stage and destroy the place, leaving everyone in awe. I've also seen them suck terribly. Thankfully, this disc falls in with the former. The music sounds better than ever, and it's not just Marky. They whole band it ruling. Frankie Venom is a character who you can just tell has done enough hard living and partying for all of us. His voice sounds as good as it ever has on this. My only real complaint would be his changing a bit of the vocal arrangement and delivery on some of my favorite songs ("Picture My Face" would be a glaring example). After listening to them a certain way for twenty years, it just sounds wrong when they're different. Overall, this a great addition to the discography of these punk legends. —Ty Stranglehold (Sonic Union)

TERRIBLE TWOS: *Self-titled: LP*

When this was playing, a hot water kettle was hitting a full boil, screaming. And I thought it was part of the song until the pause for the next one. Telling. Full-tilt, lotsa-grit, amped-up, skittering rock that's so chaotic that more noise only adds to the shit being uprooted and churning in their hurricane. I can imagine the band saying "release the bees!" during a recording and having a swarm of our aparian friends "liven up a track." And it would. When the keyboards (as percussive instrument) come in, think prime Lost Sounds. When in full-charge mode, think We March and This Moment In Black History. I call this "point and shit," music. If I had the money and time, I'd make



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Blues Brothers-style announcement system for my truck, except the speaker would be hidden and would direct sound. My navigator would point at an unsuspecting passerby, and we'd flip the switch and blast music at 'em for two seconds to see if they'd shit their pants. Not nice, but it'd be fun... and in the name of science. Terrible Twos have made a great "point and shit" record.
-Todd (Criminal IQ)

TERROR: *CBGB OMFUG Masters:*

Live 6/10/04: CD

Here is how a typical live Terror track works: the vocalist vents his anger about something, then insists on his audience to "Move that shit around" or "Tear that shit down" before he announces the title of the next song. The name of said song will usually refer to hostility, strength, conflict, or some combination of these traits. Following this, a faceless roar of a New York-style hardcore track will kick in for a few minutes, with a few requisite breakdowns littered in for good measure. Lather, mosh, repeat. Now, what's really fascinating about this disc is what is on its cover: above the human dogpile that composes a Terror show, a bald, tattooed guy's body is splayed in a crowd surfing snapshot. In our view, beneath one knee of the guy's camouflage shorts is his left leg, which is emblazoned with one of those generic tribal tattoos worn most often by men that call each other "bro" with zero irony. Moving down this gent's limb, his foot is falling out of a laceless Converse All-Star. This image is the singular most

apt symbol of what makes Terror and its antagonistic ilk such a polarizing force within the breadth of hardcore: even among the familiar marks of counterculture, that guy will always carry the clearly noticeable imprint of trite and silly-looking macho bravado on him, making his participation in this setting come off as much less independent and individualistic than it ideally should be. Never has a calf been so telling. —Reyan Ali (MVD)

THROW RAG: 2nd Place: CD

It's quite the rare occasion when a real solid band records a fantastic record that gets shelved by its own label at the time, only to be given another opportunity some years later to be released by another label who knows a good thing when they hear it (I hear Acetate is also re-releasing Throw Rag's debut LP *Tee Tot* in celebration of the 'Rag keeping the band going full steam ahead for ten years—hells yes!). Roughly half of *2nd Place* (six songs, I believe) was laid down around five or six years ago, only to be denied release by BYO Records (Throw Rag's label at the time) for some bullshit reason or another of supposed production overkill. That in itself is all jive because anyone who's seen them knows damn well that Throw Rag are fucking overkill, be it onstage or in the studio, *period*. They continue to be one of the very select few bands that consistently bring it 100%, right up there with Motörhead and The Candy Snatchers. Los Rag ended up laying down some lo-fi versions of these songs that were included on their 2003

Desert Shores rekkid, and while it was a great release, it'd could've been *that* much better had BYO gone with the original recordings route like Acetate did here on Throw Rag's latest offerings of rock'n'roll Eucharist. Funny thing is—I've always felt this to be true—as I had my paws on the original version of *Desert Shores* before it got re-recorded and went to press. The disc has "2nd Place" hand written in Sharpie on it, now that I think about it. Anyway, the old adage "better late than never" has never been proven more true here. Songs that will have you up and wobble-bopping around like a down syndrome snake dancer in no time flat include "Hang Up," "Hollywood," "Bag of Glue," and "Demons in a Row." Included are covers "I'm So Glad, I'm So Proud" (their cut from a Link Wray tribute) and "Don't Be Afraid to Pogo," their tribute to one of L.A.'s finest, The Gears. This record was laid down with their past six-piece lineup, but now they're out on the road, continuing to gather up more and more fans one gig at a time with their four-piece rock crusade. I've been listening to and watching this band for a long time (since their first year out, actually) and they continue to deliver time and time again. Scrawl this rekkid at the top of your list the next time you're out shopping for new releases. BYO already fucked up once. Don't you do the same. —Designated Dale (Acetate)

THROW RAG: 2nd Place: CD

This was a tough one to get through. This record is a mixing bowl of punk, rockabilly, country, and '50s influenced

rock'n'roll that ultimately comes out sounding like the same early rock'n'roll riffs repeated over and over coupled with Social Distortion's cheesiest moments. I wouldn't call myself a fan by any means, but I've heard several songs by these guys on different compilations and I can't remember any of them being as embarrassing as the material on this album. Somebody may be able to find a home for this in their record collection, but it just isn't cutting it for me. -Dave Dillon (Acetate)

THROW THE FIGI

In Pursuit of Tomorrow: CD

The few elements that any bad hard/alterna-rock album needs to complete the factory package are dull cover art that's been run through the ugliest Photoshop filters and brushes (Check), overdramatic song titles ("His Blood, My Hands" means a yes), corny lyrics like "Where did you go when I was bleeding?" (Uh-huh), placement on the subsidiary of a major label (Yup), and a general lack of personality (Done and done). Get ready to cue this up next, late night MTV2 video rotation. —Reyan Ali (Cordless)

TIM VERSION, THE: *Still Have the Nerve to Call Ourselves a Band*: CD

This may puzzle the loyal Razorcake reader, but I just wasn't blown away by the Tim Version upon first listen. In my defense, my initial exposure to the band was amongst a huge pile of last year's Fest bands that I was attempting to fully ingest in far too limited a timeframe to give any of the bands in question a

fair chance. Regardless, I kinda wrote the Tim Version off as just another gravelly voiced Gainesville-influenced band and moved on. Luckily, I decided to return to this band after their endless praise within these very pages and I couldn't be happier for having done so. Hot on the heels of their recent full-length for No Idea, *Still Have the Nerve to Call Ourselves a Band* collects this super-sincere, smart, funny, deservedly lauded band's non-LP tracks onto one CD, and it's certainly my favorite of their stuff. Probably you already know these dudes and love what they're doing. If not, this is a killer place to start. So glad I came back to these fellas. —Dave Williams (A.D.D.)

TOASTERS:

CBGB—The Bowery Collection: CD

This appears to be one in a series of CDs of live recordings from punk's storied epicenter. This June 28, 2008 set is solid and lively, showing why these kids were a much-respected band during ska's second wave, meaning that if you're looking for that annoying post-Operation Ivy version of ska punk here, you're shit out of luck. Nice to hear something from these guys again. —Jimmy Alvarado (MVD Audio)

TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR:

Ruined Lives: CD

I've heard my fair share of screamy hardcore the past few years and as I listened to Transistor Transistor (who used to be a snotty rock and roll band) all I could think of was a quote from Ian

MacKaye in *Instrument*. He's speaking in between songs to some kids who are slam-dancing and causing a ruckus but in the quote I replaced dancing with "screamy hardcore" and it sums up my feelings on this album. "We've never seen anything like that crazy, crazy screamy hardcore before. Actually, it's just boring as hell. So knock it off and let's all have a good time." —Kurt Morris (Level-Plane, www.level-plane.com)

TRANSIT: This Will Not Define Us!: CD

I take that title as a challenge: It's basically that "nūl" brand of radio punk pop. To be fair, it kinda reminds me of an earlier wave of when this kind of stuff took off, like in the early '00s, but it's still that kind of jam. Also, I'll probably get called a prick over this review anyway, so I'll make a comment (but serious one) on the press sheet: playing something between three and five random/scattered dates every month in your general tri-state area does not equal a tour. —Joe Evans III (Barrett)

TRICLOPS!: Out of Africa: CD

This is a totally weird, totally intense, and thoroughly enjoyable strange trip. It sounds like intelligent-manic aliens on acid formed a band after listening to a lot of Melvins, Phish, '70s progressive rock, and Zack de la Rocha's vocals. The result is unlike anything you have ever heard before, and nobody else can sound like this. Triclops! is a genre unto itself. You will either love this album or you will hate it; there is no in between in the higher-regions of experimental,

socio-political, serious-yet-inane consciousness. There are only seven songs here, but the entire experience clocks in at about forty minutes total. No matter, time is irrelevant in this dimension where scathing denouncement of American materialism and hostile world imperialism swirls in an earsplitting melodic cacophony of comedic nonsense as presented on track two "Iraq Curator." Play this for your friends and they will either look at you knowingly or as if you had three eyes on your forehead. —Marcus Solomon (Alternative Tentacles)

USED KIDS: Hoovercraft 7"

These cats' first release since a name change and a bit of a lineup shuffle (you may have heard them in their previous incarnation: the Modern Machines!) sounds just how we all expected and hoped it would. There's that same undeniable songwriting with a bit more Westerberg at times and a hint more Mellencamp at others. Stick-in-your-head gems that fly by way too fast. We need an LP from the Used Kids ASAP, so get on it guys and gal. —Dave Williams (Salinas)

VACATION: Self-titled: 7"EP

Cross spoken word bits, mixed with the occasional folky ambience of Defiance, Ohio. I was thinking, "Maybe Surrender has a contender!" Unfortunately, Vacation hug the hardest-to-listen-to bits of their predecessors. They seem philosophically and literally involved—Baudrillard, Pynchon, and

a whole host of heavy thinkers are invoked—but, I enjoyed reading the lyrics without the music playing much more. That's bad news for a band. For fans of late-period Fifteen, who really get wet when Jeff Off recites how to clean the syringe before sharing a needle for the duration of a song? I admire the driving ideals, not the execution. —Todd (Helloasshole)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Drink Fight Fuck Vol. 2: CD

When you pick up a compilation with a cover featuring a zombified GG Allin getting fondled by a couple drunk and tattooed punk chicks on it, you know what to expect. You know that you're going to hear a bunch of scum-punk bands doing sloppy tunes about pooping on faces, sticking dicks into mud puddles and that sort of thing. However, when you put this disc in, your expectations will not be met. It's filled with straightforward punk'n'roll. You will be baffled by its uniform excellence. You will be amazed by the general lack of throwaway tunes that tend to plague compilations (There is one glaring exception—"Emo Fag" by DMF—which is made all the uglier by the fact that it follows "Watch Your Back" by the Sonic Negroes, which could be the best on the disc). You may want to play it again. —MP Johnson (Zodiac Killer)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Funhouse Comp Thing II: 2X CD

Let me put this as plainly as possible: this collection, and its predecessor,



gives me hope for the world. It's no secret that the compilation disc, once an essential piece of the punk rock arsenal that provided a snapshot of the efforts of entire punk communities the world over, has been systematically co-opted and rendered wretched by labels who found it was a nice 'n' cost-effective way to peddle their wares by featuring crap songs by crap bands. These days, the lion's share of compilations is a chore, at best, to slog through. These Funhouse comps are different. Put together by someone who either remembers or rediscovered the compilation's original intent, they feature bands that have played a little club across from Seattle's Space Needle called, interestingly enough, The Funhouse. Due to its location in the Pacific Northwest, the bulk of bands representing are from that area (with a few nods to California, Canada, and other continents) and this time 'round you get two discs with fifty bands serving up Hurricane omelet-sized helpings of grade-A punk rock in myriad form, courtesy of the Spits, Bill Collectors, A-Frames, Cute Lepers, The Heels, TacoccaT, Paper Dolls, Teenage Harlots, Reptilian Civilian, and oodles of others. One is hard-pressed to find a lousy track in here anywhere, and if punk rock ain't a staple of your local radio station, this serves as a faboo alternate means of punishing your speakers. A hoot, this is, through and through. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.thefunhouseseattle.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Sick of Fun: 7" EP*
 Dude, if pressed, I probably can't remember what I ate three days ago for lunch, so bands going back to 1982 for musical inspiration don't bother me too much. (Okay, and maybe they weren't alive in 1982, and that's shitty to harsh on people over something they had no control over, like when two people fucked and a lady got pregnant.) Oh, with two caveats. That the bands themselves don't suffer from "Back in the day"-itis, and that they sound like they're having a good time for themselves. Let's check the pudding. Bands unhappy with current political policies? Check. Picture of a gasmask? Check. Someone getting shot? Check? Birthing shot (Technically a crowning)? Check. Hardcore that veers into thrash? Check. Fifteen songs on a 7"? Check. An actual band or two from the early '80s? Ribzy? Check. Coke Bust, Valoids, and Broken Needle were my favorites, and noticeable mention to Doghart Trio for being the folk Flippers (band, not TV dolphin) of the bunch. Nice. —Todd (Stress Domain, myspace.com/stressdomainrecords)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The World's Lousy with Ideas Vol. 4: 7"*
 This is the fourth volume in a series that I've never heard of. It features Touched, Coconut Coolouts, El Vicio, and Fag Cop—four bands that I've never heard of. They all play garage-y stuff. Touched and Coconut Coolouts both have a KBD punk thing happening

for their garage-y rock. It's typically not my thing, and I probably wouldn't have listened to 'em if I were told that's what they were, but I actually think they're pretty decent. The other side of the 7" with El Vicio and Fag Cop starts at bad, then quickly travels over to worse. They are both pretty garage, and I don't care for too much garage. However, because of the screeching vocals, Fag Cop bothers me so much that I almost like El Vicio. —Vincent (Almost Ready)

VICE PIRATE: *Discovering the Origin of Language: CDEP*

These guys sound a lot like Rise Against, which would be okay in my book, but add in some more technical bits (à la latter day Strung Out) and it can start to lurch precariously between being good, like Smoke or Fire, or bad, like Paramore. My main problem with the band lies in the fact that I can't get into the vocalist, who has too much of the nü-emo forced angst, bordering-on-whiny sound going on for my taste. I guess, given the right circle, these guys could get big, but I'm not feeling it too much. —Adrian (Pee)

VICTIMS: *Killer: CD*

F'in' incredible! I have listened to this disc well over fifty times, and each time I am amazed at how great this album is. Victims have released one scorch after another, and I believe this surpasses everything they have done so far. Even more impressive is they pulled this off

as a three piece. Also, they are entering a realm of music that defies easy categorization. The hardcore elements are still there, but the rock'n'roll side that has been lurking underneath is more obvious now, and actually enhances the overall effect. Every song blasts away with intensity without resorting to blinding thrash. Instead, the songs are actual songs played with the right amount of speed mixed with time changes and a tunefulness that lodges them deep into your memory. Johan's voice still has that punch as well. Not one bad song in the bunch. A solid record the whole way through. This is definitely one of my "desert island discs." —M.Avg (Combat Rock Industry)

VIVIAN GIRLS: *Wild Eyes: 7"*

Not even thirty seconds into the first track, I swore that this Brooklyn band of girls listened to a lot of Black Tambourine. Hell, I thought they could be Black Tambourine. They have soft, female vocals that glide perfectly with their blend of minimalist shoegaze and twee pop on the title track. The b-side is more minimalist shoegaze stuff, but more ambient and less pop than the a-side. Seriously, I don't know what else to say except that I think it's rad that I finally heard a band that has a distinct Black Tambourine influence. I recommend keeping your ear to the ground for more from this band. —Vincent (Plays With Dolls)

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WACO FUCK:**Paranoia Is Total Awareness: CD**

I know most people complain "I like their earlier stuff better" when critiquing a band's progression, but in this case I gotta say I like them more as their sound progressed from grindy, über-speedy hardcore to something a smidge slower with more groove, more anger and less bludgeoning. Thankfully, they start off with their latest stuff, then work their way backwards, with an earlier EP's worth of tracks and ending with an even earlier EP's worth of tracks, for a total of twenty-two in all. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Life's A Rape*)

WENDOL: Self-titled: EP

Metal with the dual vocal thing happening. One dry throat, the other a deep, wet, burping sound. The strongest song of the five is "Mercy Killing." Though nothing groundbreaking, this song has a decent amount of energy and moves at a decent pace. Other than that, this is just okay on the whole. —M. Avrg (*Pyrate Punx*)

YOKOHAMA HOOKS: Turn On: 7" EP

This may be hitting me completely wrong, but I hear icy hipster art rock, like more time has been spent in their lives shopping for clothes than working on songs. Perhaps it's the shrill trilling of the vocalist that's making me squint, and even though I'm sitting in my room listening to this, my first impulse is just to turn around and leave my house. That can't be good. Maybe it's the dismantling of

Agent Orange's "Bloodstains" that's got me all pissy. Three songs. —Todd (Tic Tac Totally)

YOKOHAMA HOOKS: Turn On: 7" EP

Art school minimalism in the rhythm section (think early Wire) but with more aggression in the guitars (think Tyrades) and topped off with vibrato in the vocals (think Sleater Kinney). That's where things get dicey because there's little room for error whenever vibrato seeps into the singing. It's like tuning in an AM station on a small radio, the whole AM band compressed into a display window only a couple of inches wide. When it's dialed in, the vocals and guitars synch up, like on "Bloodstains." But a millimeter in either direction, and I tune out because the noise masks the melodies. —Mike Faloon (Tic Tac Totally)

YOLKS, THE: Wandering: 7"

Chicago hit makers, The Yolks, return with a follow-up to their heralded debut 7" that is every bit as good and, at times, exceeds the simple brilliance of the first record. Along with the Fevers and fellow Chicagoans, the Bold Ones and Headache City, they must have access to a piece of the garage pop collective unconscious that remains inaccessible to ninety-nine percent of the bands playing and recording music today. "Wandering" is an effortless, uncomplicated, one-and-a-half minute piece of sullied, lyrically existential genius that finishes far too early. Like a character in a Jim Jarmusch film, the

person in the song rambles from place to place, taking in what he can and moving on to the next destination when he feels the need. In a perfect world, "Wandering (Part II)" would extend to the B-side for seven-plus minutes of absolute perfection. Not to knock the other two songs, 'cause they rule with the same nonchalance as "Wandering." "Don't Blame Me" crashes its way through a couple minutes of "whoa-whoas" and the B-side is a ripping instrumental. As with all the other Bachelor releases I've reviewed or purchased, the jacket sleeve is maddeningly small, making it next to impossible to put the record away. Luckily, this record will spend most of its time out of its jacket, sitting on my turntables, spinning at 45 RPM. —Josh Benke (Bachelor)

YOUNG KNIVES: Superabundance: CD

Somewhere between the Futureheads and Franz Ferdinand you can find the Young Knives. Poppy rock with a post punk influence. The first four songs are potential hits, with "Light Switch" the most interesting of the entire album. After that, they lose steam and fill the rest of the album with far less charismatic material. —M. Avrg (Rykodisc)

YOUNG MEN, THE: Fuck You, We're the Young Men: 7" EP

Sometimes, having a memory fuckin' blows. Memory #1: most (if not all) of these dudes, in one incarnation or another, were in Bent Outta Shape. Memory #2: *Stray Dog Town* is a

fantastic album. Memory #3: Bent Outta Shape "space shuttle"ed: they blew up on the ascent and disbanded. Memory #4: Bummed. Memory #5: Whenever I meet Jamie, the lead singer, he tells me all these ideas on how to make *Razorcake* better ("put a joke on every page") and he's never once pulled through, even though I've said, "Don't tell me about it. Do it." Problem #1: This is no Bent Outta Shape. Prime Replacements is given up for so-so period Paul Westerberg solo albums. But. It's. The. Same. Dudes. As. Bent. Outta. Shape. (With longer hair.) I probably wouldn't be so bored if there was no expectation, no memory. Shitty, I know. —Todd (Plate of Shrimp, no address)

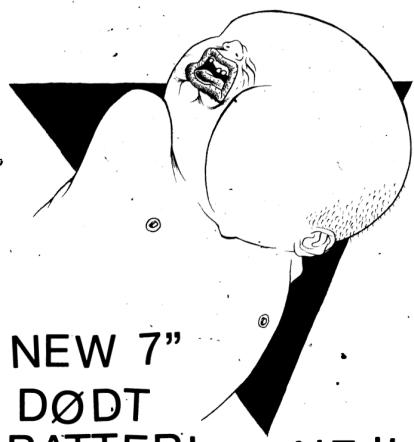
ZHENIA GOLOV: Self-titled: 7" EP

Angry hardcore that sounds heavily influenced by mid-'80s straight edge stuff (although thankfully devoid of all the metal riffage) and maybe some earlier Midwest hardcore. While they didn't get my skirt in a bunch, they weren't terrible, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Railroaded)

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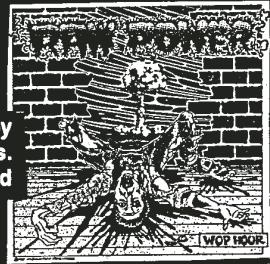
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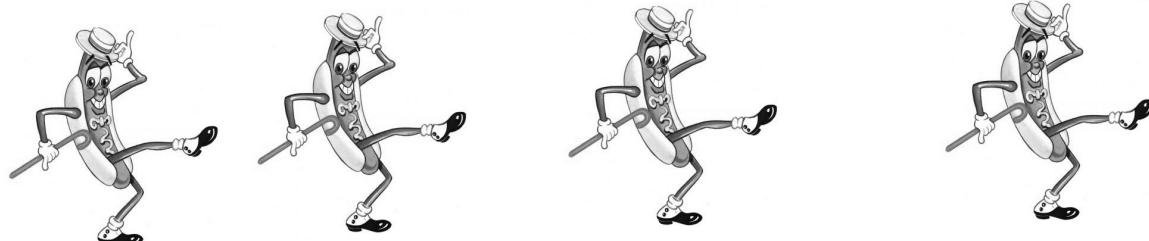
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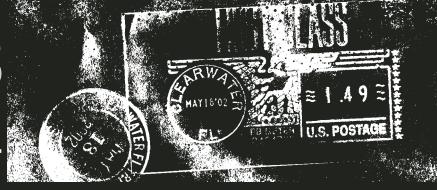


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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
or to be posted on www.razorcake.org in the next couple months.



- **A.D.D.**, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674
- **Absent** c/o Aaron Townsend, 1214 W Franklin St., Apt #5, Richmond, VA 23220
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- **A-F**, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
- **Almost Ready**, PO Box 4034, Attleboro, MA 02703
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Anagram** c/o Cherry Red, Unit 3A Long Island House, 1-4 Warble Way, Acton, London, W3 0RG, U.K.
- **Apocalypse Machine**, PO Box 56641, Portland, OR 97238-6641
- **Apop**, 2831 Cherokee St., St. Louis, MO 63188
- **Art Of The Underground**, PO Box 250, Buffalo, NY 14205
- **Bachelor**, 5421 Adnet 186, Austria
- **Barrett**, 229 Burnet Park Dr., Syracuse, NY 13204
- **Big Action**, 915 Scheffer Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55102
- **Boom Chick** c/o Liz Hitt, 6405 Morill Ave., Lincoln, NE 68507
- **Bridge Nine**, 119 Foster St., Building 4, Ste. 3, Peabody, MA 01960
- **Captain Oi**, c/o PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA, U.K.
- **Carnal Knowledge**, 131 Tompkins Ave. #2, Brooklyn, NY 11206
- **Cassette Deck**, PO Box 7007, Algonquin, IL 60102-7007
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- **Cordless**, 30 Irving Place, 3rd Floor, NY, NY 10003
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- **It's Alive**, 11411 Hewes St., Orange, CA 92869
- **Johann's Face**, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647
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- **Kemado**, 601 West 26th St., Ste. 1175, NY, NY 10001
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- **Learning Curve**, PO Box 18378, Mpls., MN 55418
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ZINE REVIEWS

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ARTCORE #24, \$2, 8 1/4" x 11 3/4", offset with a glossy cover, 44 pgs. Welly's been going at this for well over twenty years now, weathering the ups and downs in what constitutes the "punk scene." I'm sensing some cynicism towards the current retro trend and the direction punk/hardcore is heading, yet there's also a definite passion for this stuff as well. Interviews this issue are with Subhumans (Canada), The Rites, Void Control, The Great St. Louis, Government Warning (who have nothing of interest to say), and Loved Ones. My favorite section is Vaultage, which looks at past bands, labels, artists, zines, and whatever else from the formative years. In this installment we get interviews from T.S.O.L., Placebo Records, Dead Kennedys (reprinted from *Scream* zine, circa 1983), articles on the Meatmen, Jerry's Kids, and the Instigators. Another excellent feature in this issue is the article on horror imagery in punk. Top all this off with a great reviews section. Seriously, one of the best zines ever. —M.Avg (1 Aberdulais Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 2PH, Wales, U.K.)

BIG HANDS #6, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 24 pgs. Aaron's been putting out *Big Hands* for, what, two years now? Maybe less? Already on issue six, plus the various point-five issues he's done as well; as someone who tilled the ground of the "perzine"—don't let the term scare you off—just about to death over the past decade or so, I can only give him a thumbs up when it comes to putting issues out so regularly. It's some goddamn hard work to cull the noteworthy facets of one's life, think about it, strain it through the "let's make this interesting for the reader"

colander, and serve up something readable with any sense of timeliness or regularity. On the other hand, there's something to be said for letting events in one's life simmer for a bit. This issue of *Big Hands* seems a bit scattered in comparison to past issues. Not that the writing is poor—this guy can write me under the table any day of the week—but at only twenty-four pages, including the covers, splash pages, etc., I just feel like this one's a bit thin on content compared to previous outings. Still, if a zine can consistently use phrases like "My fellow party-goers have internalized the panopticon in a social sense. The pixilated dawn of the personal media revolution has finally arrived, with everyone up in each other's business more than ever before," and still have a fool like me cracking up repeatedly, the dude's obviously on to something. —Keith Rosson (Aaron Smith, 1104 Imperial Rd., Cary, NC 27511)

BLACK LIQUID, \$3 / \$4 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 34 pgs. I don't understand. This is a zine of rants and poetry and stories, but they don't make any sense to me. It's like some poor attempt at Dadaist literature without the intention of doing so. I've also been on oxycodone for the past four days, but I don't think that would change my opinion of this zine. Drowsy, awake, or high, this is bizarre, and not in a way that drugs could make more interesting. —Kurt Morris (427 Lee St. Apt. C, Blacksburg, VA 24060)

DAFT MANIA, \$0.75, 5 1/2" x 4 1/4", photocopied, 12 pgs. Oh no! A scribbled cover with lousy bubble letters? It seems destined for the recycle bin already. But it is only twelve



"Drowsy, awake, or high, this is bizarre, and not in a way that drugs could make more interesting."

—Kurt Morris
Black Liquid

pages. I can get through this. Turn the page, read the first sentences: "!"*Daft Mania!* Is crazy about the French techno band Daft Punk! Each zine highlights one of their songs and their influence on pop culture." (...Huh?! How did a fan of French techno find *Razorcake* anyway? We are a far-reaching magazine indeed.) Spend sixty seconds reading the content: The author listened to a Daft Punk song when he was nine, then heard the song playing during a scene in a movie several years later and remembered what a great song it was. Ah, so this zine is not actually about the song's influence on pop culture, but instead, about a song that means something to a teenager. That, I can respect. Since techno is pretty lame and this zine isn't too great, maybe the author of *Daft Mania* should read a few issues of *Razorcake* and get really into DIY punk, then he could start putting out better zines. —Lauren Trout (SunStar, 1413 Rabbit Peakway, Hemet, CA 92545)

EAR DAMAGE #20, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 52 pgs. This is a solid little zine from Alabama, filled to the brim with honesty and good-natured grit. Included in this issue are interviews with punk/hip-hop drummer Greg Washington, a chat with Slim Wilson, a surprisingly informative history lesson on Mr. T, and the standard dose of letters and reviews. Also included is a well-aimed interview with Mark Rainey of TKO Records (the discussion includes mentions of hometown heroes The Bodies). Every bit of writing is interesting, which is a rarity in zines these days. One recommendation: get someone to proofread this, as the grammatical and printing errors range from

annoying to unreadable (see: "Table of Contents"). Minor nitpicking aside, this is no-filler goodness. —Will Kwiatkowski (Ear Damage, PO Box 582, Eight Mile, AL 36663)

INSIDE #12, \$9, 8 1/2" x 11", full-color offset, 40 pgs. Another mindfuck of an issue of what is most probably the creepiest artzine in Europe, if not the planet. This issue's got the same sense of thoughtful, chin-stroking well-roundedness as the previous one I reviewed: this time around you've got an interview with the guy who makes those horrifically realistic Autopsy Baby dolls, one with a guy who has a skull tattooed over his face, photos of what honestly appears to be a man inserting a fat wooden Blue Diamond matchstick into the skin on the bridge of his nose and lighting it on his forehead, etc. There's also a story about a guy's roommate who kills pigs in the bathtub and drinks the blood, a really disturbing painting of a guy nearly pulling a woman's lips off and, my personal favorite, an ink drawing of a woman on all fours who has, for some reason, taken it upon herself to insert a telephone (and not a slim little Nokia, either—we're talking full-on *Archie Bunker*-style rotary here) into her hoo-ha. There wasn't a whole lot here that I identified with (actually, most of it nearly made me start dry-heaving) but *Inside* does do a hell of a job in playing devil's advocate with the idea of what art's purpose may or may not be. —Keith Rosson (Inside, PO Box 2266, D-54212 Trier, Germany)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #299, #300, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", newsprint, too many pages to count! Wow! How did this zine get up

to number three hundred and I haven't even heard of it? I guess they interview cool punk bands, write record reviews, and print everything in really dark ink so it comes off on your fingers. Plus, it seems like they have some pretty great writers, like George Tabb and Jessica Mills. And then there's this guy named Mykel Board who uses the word "negro" to refer to African Americans. If I wrote that in a column, I'd hope Todd and Sean would banish me to a land devoid of cereal, but what do I

generally, this zine speaks for itself. —Kurt Morris (*Narcolepsy* Press Review, PO Box 17131, Anaheim, CA, 92817-7131)

NERF JIHAD: THE COLLECTED WORKS,

\$3, 5½" x 8½", copied, 64 pgs. Similar to Rich Mackin's stuff—in which he writes fake letters to various consumer complaint resources and then prints the responses—only this guy's from Australia and the letters he writes often aren't

awesome handmade poster you sent with this, dudes. I recommend charging three bucks and putting one in each issue instead of just giving 'em to the reviewers. —Will Kwiatkowski (*Plastique Pop*, 2421A S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207)

PROFANE EXISTENCE #56, \$5, 8½" x 11", newsprint with glossy cover, 84 pgs.

I tend to enjoy reading *P.E.*, and I'm glad they're still around. But at the same time, I don't believe

relive times with people who now seem slightly out of reach. That being said, some of the stories in here are pretty funny and it seems like there's a lot of Billy's life that the reader is being kept from; some dark things that are understandably vague when one also reads continually through this issue about Billy's solitary life. Thus, some of the material could have been fleshed out a bit more, but perhaps that will come in another issue. As it stands, this is a good read from someone who

"After reading this, I felt I truly understood an area of the world in which I only had a vague and incorrect impression. Try getting that from a history textbook."

—Will Kwiatkowski, *Scam* #6

know? —Maddy (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

MOUNTZA #2, \$7, 8½" x 10¾", offset with three color cover, 72 pgs. Wow! This is a really good zine. Clean, functional layouts, awesome photo reproduction, and excellent offset printing. The two-color cover is very eye-catching as well. Inside, you will find interviews with Trencher, Hjerte Stop, Mouth Breather, Vodka Juniors, Bombenalarm, Transistor Transistor, Death Token/Spild Af Vinyl, and Magrudergrind (written in Greek), among others. There's also a Burial/Nightmare/Crude 2007 tour diary. The columns at the beginning are also written in Greek (seeing as that's where Mountza is based from). Most definitely a zine worth picking up and supporting. —M.Avg (Adrianos Panagiotis, Gr. Afxentiou 5, 146 71 Nea Erythrea, Athens, Greece, mountzazine@yahoo.com)

NARCOLEPSY #3, \$2, 5½" x 8½", copied, ? pgs.

This is the second zine I've reviewed this time around that is (primarily) a zine that reviews zines (the other being *Zine World*). Pretty much have the same thoughts as I did in that review: no point in reviewing this on content, it is what it is. However, *Narcolepsy* does have some things that *Zine World* does not, including comics, ads (cool ones), a story, book reviews, and other odds and ends. So it's something a little different, but

really that interesting. Mostly, Matt contacts local talk show celebrities and then prints their responses and the autographed promo glossies they send him. A bit more bullshitting would've gone a long way towards spicing this one up. Case in point: the one where he gets into repeated (and consistently more snotty on both parts) exchanges with the makers of Fruit Pops over just what the hell is *exactly* in their "Flavour," which is listed as one of the six ingredients in the drink. Other than that, I was pretty tepid on the whole thing. More sass, dude. Give us more sass. —Keith Rossom (Matt, PO Box 575, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia)

PLASTIQUE POP #1, \$2, 5½" x 8½", Xeroxed, 38 pgs.

Do you like the Midwest? Do you like bands that probably list Creation and/or the Jam as an influence? Do you enjoy multiple, often-awkwardly-placed references to Joey Ramone in zombie form? If so, then this fanzine is worth your two dollars. It is focused around the power pop and mod scene of the Midwest, with interviews from the Insomniacs, Double Dynamite, Boys Club, the Danger, an entertaining tour diary with the Plexi 3, an interview with Wee Rock Records, a "Tech Talk" interview with Jim Diamond of Ghetto Recorders, and more. This zine has piqued my interest in a few of these bands, which is what it's supposed to do, right? Consider it a success. Also,

with their history, they're living up to their potential. Granted, like *MRR*, *P.E.* relies on reader contributions. Yet, some quality control could be exercised. All too often a chunk of the contributions are "ehhhh..."; and the fiction piece, "Open Polls, Closed Minds" is atrocious in this issue. I did enjoy the recipes section, the 2008 preview of Swedish bands, and the interviews conducted by Mel Hughes. Seriously, Mel is an excellent asset to the zine. Please utilize him as much as possible. His interviews go beyond the small talk, and get the bands to open up. This issue, has talks with Murder Disco X, Protestant, Hevn, Blackout, Atomgevitter, and Amy Toxic. Then there's the section written by prisoners, a piece titled "Fat: Public Enemy Number One?" columns, reviews, and other odds and ends, not to mention a sampler CD. —M.Avg (PO Box 18051, Minneapolis, MN 55418)

PROOF I EXIST #9, \$?, 5½" x 8½", copied, ? pgs.

Billy's done some nice work with the latest issue of *Proof I Exist*. He was frustrated with the content of the latest issue, so he deleted it all and just made the whole issue letters he wrote to his family and friends. It makes things more interesting. It allows for the ability to see some dynamic between the author and the recipients of his letters—some of those are personal, specific things from the relationship while other letters recount past tales in an attempt to

definitely knows what he's doing when it comes to writing zines. —Kurt Morris (Billy, PO Box 470507, Chicago, IL 60647-0507)

SCAM #6, \$3, 5½" x 8½", Xeroxed with glossy cover, 56 pgs. This is a familiar-feeling and -looking zine based out of San Francisco, and I'm glad it made its way into my home. This particular issue is all about the stencil graffiti scene in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The habits and history of the artists and their stencils weave in and out of the city's history, and make for a fascinating read. The recent history of the area and its newfound art form are finely intertwined. The author hangs out with graffiti artists, traveling everywhere from the roughest spots of the city to the most upscale areas, and even goes out stenciling with a crew. The stencils are a great vehicle for the history lesson, and this zine does a phenomenal job in detailing the recent struggles of Buenos Aires in content and emotion. After reading this, I felt I truly understood an area of the world of which I only had a vague and incorrect impression. Try getting that from a history textbook. —Will Kwiatkowski (Eric Lyle, PO Box 40272, San Francisco, CA 94140)

SHORT FAST & LOUD #19, \$?, 7" x 7", newsprint, 84 pgs. Haven't read this zine since the first Super Sabado sometime ago. The new format looks cool.

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Other than that, it's still *SF&L*. Interviews with Sayyadina and Violent Headache. Then you have the "Gimme 5" section, tons of reviews, and columns. The noise section, "Circuit Benders" by

rich and bright. His words are wonderful at helping me form a picture in my mind of what it is he's saying. Writing something like, "My heart is clotted with more dead pulp than the fattest

excerpt on males and females in relationships to multiple pieces on friends who have passed away. This is halfway between a political zine and a personal piece, but when it gets personal,

ZINE WORLD #25.5, \$?, 8 1/2" x 11", copied, 12 pgs. *Zine World* is always a good read. If you like reading reviews of other zines, that is. This is a supplemental issue between

"Give us more sass."

-Keith Rosson
Nerf Jihad: The Collected Works

Chris Dodge, and Loser's column "Blasts from the Past" were interesting. Comes with a Insect Warfare/Flagitious Idiosyncrasy In The Dilapidation split EP. — M. Avrg (Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931 / www.sixweeksrecords.com)

SMALL THINGS WE DIE, Stamps, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, ? pgs. Gotta admit that I was pleasantly surprised that a zine full of poetry by a prisoner wasn't all poems about prison. There was a nice breadth of topics here, all in free verse. Normally, I don't like poetry zines (which is ironic, because I've put poetry in my zines quite a bit), but this was nice and simple. Chris's use of words and phrasing is

avocado" evokes such a strong picture and feeling along with it. If you're interested in poetry in the slightest, check this out. It's talented and is coming from a point of view that is not heard too often. (Note: Unfortunately, because of the author being in prison, it's not possible for other prisoners to order.) —Kurt Morris (Chris Early, #299765, NECX — PO Box 5000, Mountain City, TN 37683)

WAKE UP SCREAMING #1, ?, 8 1/2" x 11", Xeroxed, 52 pgs. This is a different one, from presentation to content. It's stapled in the corner like a high school book report and features a large variety of articles, ranging from a loose and very opinionated

I almost feel invasive reading on. I could go either way. —Will Kwiatkowski (Wake Up Screaming, PO Box 3, Eugene, OR 97440)

WELCOME TO FLAVOR COUNTRY #12, \$1 or stamps, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", Xeroxed, 32 pgs. An easy-reading zine (save the last piece) about slice-o'-life things, with topics ranging from eye patches to support groups to modern churches. The writing is down-to-earth and very well thought out. Direct, often unusual, and pretty interesting. Probably better for ya then a pack of Marlboros, too. —Will Kwiatkowski (Kurt Morris, 8820 Stone Ave. N. #301, Seattle, WA 98103)

numbers 25 and 26. In other words, they had a lot of zine reviews backing up and needed to get them out. Being a supplement, it's really simple layout, stapled in the upper left corner. Writing a review of a zine that reviews zines is akin to something like writing a review in a food magazine of a cookbook comprised of recipes from a bunch of various people—except the end result of what's in the cookbook will be much more appetizing and interesting than most of the stuff that's reviewed in *Zine World*. —Kurt Morris (*Zine World*, PO Box 330156, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-0156)

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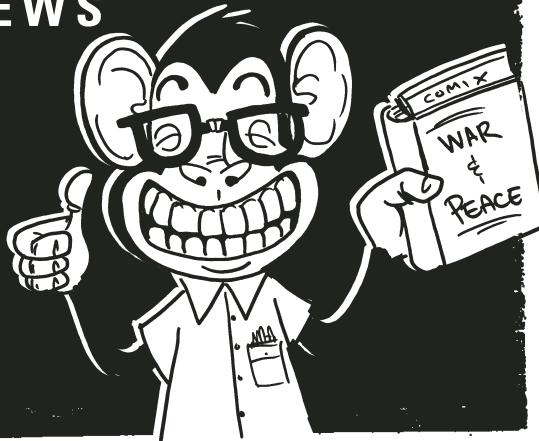


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BOOK REVIEWS



Deathtripping: The Extreme Underground

By Jack Sargent, 336 pgs.

This is kinda like the *People's History of the United States* of film tomes, not so much because of its presentation of an alternate film history so much as it is so crammed with information that it takes triple the amount of time to take it all in. For those unfamiliar, the Cinema of Transgression was a New York-based underground film movement that sought to marry trash/sleaze sensibilities to art-house film fare, and vice versa. Relying heavily on sex, gore, shock tactics, and art school pretentiousness, its progenitors sought to push out to the extremes of human culture and capture it all on film. Their success is largely based on how one feels about their high art/low brow celluloid endeavors, but there is little denying that it's damned hard to sit on the fence about their efforts. Sargent is obviously a fan and, as luck would have it, no slouch of a writer. Here he has created what can only be described

Catholics has achieved some success. According to CNN exit polls, Bush won 52% of the Catholic vote in 2004, up from 47% four years earlier

In *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Growing Political Power of Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States*, Hudson describes Catholic participation in conservative activism and urges his co-religionists to ally with right-wing evangelicals. The bulk of the book is devoted to attacks on progressives and secularists. Riddled with contradictions and double standards, *Onward Christian Soldiers* provides an unsparing look into the ideology of the Religious Right.

Hudson takes aim at separation of church and state and the U.S. Supreme Court's 1947 endorsement of that principle in *Everson v. Board of Education*. He ominously notes that the author of the court's decision, Justice Hugo Black, was "a former member in the '20s of the Robert E. Lee Klan No. 1 cell of the Ku Klux Klan in Birmingham, Alabama." The reader is meant to associate the KKK with separation of church and state, even though the hate group has consistently opposed that constitutional doctrine.

Hudson's attempt to link secularism with racism looks even more absurd when he discusses the origins of the Christian Right. He traces the birth of the movement to outrage over new regulations passed by the Internal Revenue Service in the 1960s and '70s. At issue was the IRS's decision to cancel tax exemptions for southern religious schools that discriminated against black students. Hudson denies that opponents of the regulations were simply motivated by racism: "The government was presenting a real threat to Christian education," he writes. However, the author slips up later, admitting that the fight was about "the integration of Christian schools." The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately sided with the IRS, but private religious schools remain a bulwark against integration in many southern communities. In electoral terms, the exemption issue played a key role in rallying white southerners to Ronald Reagan's candidacy in 1980.

Along with federal officials who oppose tax breaks for segregation, other villains in Hudson's book include the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The author criticizes the Conference for treating economic exploitation as a fundamental evil and a threat to life, instead of focusing on abortion, homosexuality, and stem-cell research. In terms of economics, Hudson regards the GOP's tax cuts as the best help for the poor, ignoring data that show increases in poverty, debt, and homelessness on Bush's watch.

Despite the economic figures, Hudson puts great stock in the president's "compassionate conservatism." Referring to a meeting with Bush held

Senator John McCain met with Reverend John Hagee and accepted his endorsement for president. Hagee has referred to the Catholic Church as the "Antichrist system" and as the "Great Whore" described in the Bible.

as the quintessential documentation on the Cinema of Transgression, and one that will be mighty tough to improve upon. Starting with the origins of underground cinema, he methodically builds on that foundation and lays out the history of the Cinema of Transgression: its sensibilities, its ties to punk rock's noisy fringes, its glory days, and its influence on current underground filmmakers. Included are in-depth interviews with many of the movement's key figures—Nick Zedd, Richard Kern, Cassandra Stark, Linda B, Lydia Lunch, and even Lung Leg, to name a few—tons of pictures, analyses of the films, and even a few scripts. The resulting whole is something of a marvel, in that the writer's enthusiasm for the subject is infectious, making even those who aren't all that jazzed about the subject matter wanna go out and subject themselves to a Kern film or two. In short, this is a mighty fine, effective book. —Jimmy Alvarado (Soft Skull Press / Counterpoint, 2117 Fourth Street, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94710)

Onward Christian Soldiers: The Growing Political Power of Catholics and Evangelicals in the United States

By Deal W. Hudson, 384 pgs.

Most observers of the Christian Right focus on Protestant evangelicals. Evangelical support is crucial to Republican electoral success, but elements in both the Roman Catholic Church and the GOP have worked to bring Catholics into the Republican fold. One of the key players in that effort is Deal W. Hudson, a Catholic who served as an adviser to George W. Bush and the Republican National Committee from 1999-2004. GOP outreach to

before the 2000 election, Hudson remarks that it was "clear to me that Bush was inclined to commit federal funds to address the compassion concerns he had discussed at length." Perhaps he should have spoken to Bush about that after the election. In addition to a plethora of cuts in programs that benefit the poor and disabled, Bush's budgets have under-funded the president's own programs—the "faith-based" anti-poverty grants and "No Child Left Behind" education initiative—by tens of billions. Hudson's faith in George W. Bush surpasses all understanding.

Morality is a recurring theme of the book, and the author misses few opportunities to give voice to hypocrisy and bigotry. He praises Reverend James Robison, who achieved prominence in the late 1970s by charging that gays, in Hudson's words, "recruited children for sexual acts." Hudson states that Robison's stance reflected "a Christian perspective." He also lauds Jerry Falwell and Anita Bryant's anti-gay campaign in Florida, which gave rise to the Moral Majority and went under the slogan of "Save Our Children." It is therefore striking that one of Hudson's heroes in the war against immorality is Cardinal Bernard F. Law, who spent years covering up for a number of child-molesting Boston priests.

Another example of the gap between the author's moralist rhetoric and the actions of right-wing Christians is the scandal that caused Hudson to resign his position as adviser to Bush. He quit in 2004, following a published report about an incident that had occurred ten years earlier, when he was a professor at Fordham University. Hudson offers a terse account of the event, saying that he "had a sexual encounter with a female undergraduate."



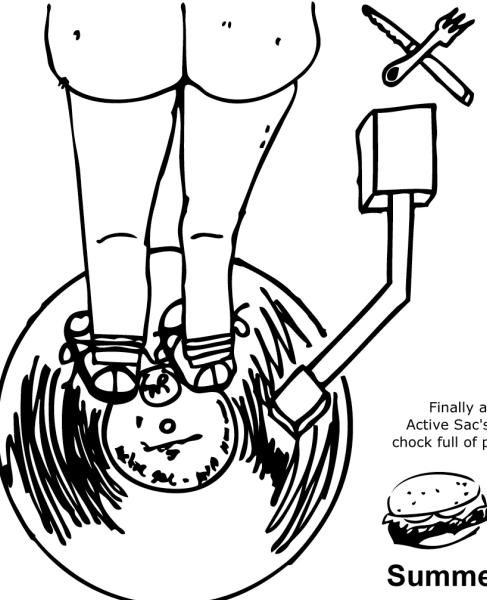
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That isn't the full story. The student, Cara Poppas, discussed the episode in a 2004 interview with the *National Catholic Reporter*. Poppas said that back in 1994, when she was enrolled in Hudson's class, she confided to him her feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide. A few days later, the professor took the student to a bar, although she was, at eighteen, under legal drinking age. According to Poppas, she became intoxicated and Hudson brought her back to his office, where a sexual encounter took place. "I was completely in Dr. Hudson's hands," she stated, noting that she was "unable to stand up." Shortly after the incident, the student filed sexual harassment charges against the professor, who resigned his position at Fordham.

Writing about that episode in *Onward Christian Soldiers*, Hudson's main emotion appears to be self-pity. He describes the public scandal resulting from his actions as a "horrific experience" in which he was "personally attacked" by political opponents. However, he now feels comfortable enough about his past to accuse secularists of creating a "morass of immorality in education."

After launching numerous tirades, Hudson strikes a more positive note when he writes about alliances between Catholic conservatives and

evangelical Protestants. He believes that the two groups are already drawing closer. "It's a virtual reuniting of Christendom," he proclaims. Hudson's warm feelings toward right-wing Protestants aren't entirely reciprocated. On February 27, Catholics received a sharp reminder of their place in the Religious Right when Senator John McCain met with Reverend John Hagee and accepted his endorsement for president. A leading evangelical activist, Hagee has referred to the Catholic Church as the "Antichrist system" and as the "Great Whore" described in the Bible. In scripture, the Great Whore is ultimately "consumed by fire"—a clear indication of the degree of tolerance Catholics can expect if people like Hagee ever achieve full control in America.

Back in 2000, McCain criticized candidate Bush for making a speech at Bob Jones University, an evangelical institution, because the school's leaders were anti-Catholic. Apparently, McCain has now learned who's really in charge of the Christian Right. Since Hudson disregards so many other facts, he might at least take note of that one. —Chris Pupus (Threshold Editions)



DVD REVIEWS



Chemical X DVD Zine, The: DVD

At first, I had a little bit of cognitive dissonance over what I thought a "DVD zine" should be like and what this DVD is like. I was thinking something along the lines of some nice live footage or a video, then some interview bits to give a little insight into where the band is coming from, maybe some short documentary footage or a short film, and so on—but once I kinda settled back and came to terms that that wasn't going to be the experience here, I found myself actually enjoying this. While most of the above is not here, there is oodles of music to be seen/heard (Dan Padilla, The Unlovable, Negativland, Kill The Scientist, The Criminals, and many others), along with little bits of quasi-commercials and odds and sods, resulting in something more akin to an underground music cable show than a "zine." Sure, most of the bands fall into punk subgenres I'm not too enthused about, and the sound on the live bits can be a wee bit dicey at times, but it looks like the Geykido Comet kids had such a ball putting this together and obviously put much work into the presentation that what may be lacking is more than made up for in enthusiasm. If I had to put things a bit more succinctly, any DVD that includes footage of Peelander-Z giving the Toy Dolls' live show a run for its money, a band playing a Razorcake benefit dressed in a dinosaur suit, and a video of Riverboat Gamblers playing the best song off their most recent album is well worth the price of admission. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.gcrecords.com)

Dead Boys: Return of the Living Dead Boys: DVD

Back in 1986, the Dead Boys performed a one-off reunion show with their original lineup on Halloween. The DVD, if you haven't figured this out yet, documents the reunion. The cover boasts an introduction from the legendary Joey Ramone, which lasts about fifteen seconds, and then the band enters stage left. They quickly play through a set list of hits, but their energy seems lacking until about five songs into the show. Stiv, in a full leather outfit, doesn't really begin to move until he strips down to his pants. The rest of the

show is mostly uneventful, but full of energy and fun to watch.

Now, I have a problem sitting still for an hour. Around fifty-five minutes into the show, I have to pee. I figure that I'm not going to miss much, so I go to the bathroom. I walk away for thirty seconds and there's a naked Stiv Bators on my TV.

The bonus features aren't much, but I guess that doesn't really matter because the focus isn't the bonus features, because the very definition of such means that they are superfluous. Anyway, all it is is an interview with Stiv and Frank Secich (I have no idea who he is) from 1980 that includes a rare video of "Sonic Reducer," which is way better than any million dollar video I've ever seen just because of the intro.

I think band DVDs are pretty worthless except for two occasions: 1) The band is broken up and has no chance of getting back together or 2) There is no way in hell you will ever get to see this band live. Since the Dead Boys fit pretty well into category 1, I have no problem with this DVD. The quality isn't great, but I don't think anyone will really care if they want to see the Dead Boys handing out their brand of mayhem. —Bryan Static (MVD Visual, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456, www.mvdvisual.com)

Flipper: Live Targetvideo 77–1980-81: DVD

There is no getting around the fact that Flipper is an acquired taste. I, for one, am fully in awe of them. My first exposure to them was hearing the song "Sex Bomb" probably six or seven years ago and hating it because it was repetitive and just barely hanging together. A couple years later though, I heard the song "Ever" and something just clicked. There was no pretense to the song. It was about the most naked and direct song about feeling like shit that one can make. The fact that it was able to sum up a bunch of hard-to-express thoughts and emotions into a simple three minute song was god-like to me. I think therein lies part of the secret of Flipper's charm. They are able to pull moments of truth—and even beauty—out of chaos. The two shows on this DVD perfectly showcase Flipper in all their rough glory. The punk rock here isn't pretty at all. The band fucks up all over the place. Even when something isn't breaking, some of the songs are still almost too painful to listen to. Case in point is the song "The Wheel" from the 1980 show in Berkeley. The song is twelve minutes long and literally consists of Will Shatter singing, "I am the wheel" over and over while doing the wheel dance, which is basically just spinning one arm in a circle. The first set from Berkeley in 1980 is a little bouncier feeling and has a lot of songs like "Friends" and "Oh, Oh, Ay Oh" that I don't actually recognize from any of their albums. Basically, it feels like a Flipper house party among friends. The second set is from a year later when the band opened for Throbbing Gristle in San Francisco. Except for "Low Rider," all these songs are on *Generic* and *Gone Fishin'*. This set feels more ominous and darker, as it has the band playing heavier material and doing things like breaking both a bass (on accident) and a guitar (not so much on accident) through the course of the set. These sets probably won't win over new fans, but it's fascinating to see the band during its heyday. —Adrian (MVD Visual, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456)

Le Scrawl: Full Frontal Nudity: DVD

I stared at this for a couple minutes, thinking, "What the fuck is this?" At first, I thought it was a packaging gimmick. I thought they put a CD in a DVD case to make it stand out. After all, *Life Is Abuse* doesn't put

out DVDs. Bands on labels like Life Is Abuse don't put out DVDs. Only Christina Aguilera and Epitaph bands do that, right? Eventually, I realized I was wrong and popped it into the DVD machine. As it played, I still couldn't help but ask, "What's the point?" Let me step aside from that question for a moment and make something very clear: Le Scrawl is an awesome band. They refuse to commit to a single genre, instead jumping between grind, crust, street punk, death, hip-hop, jazz, ska, and more. They manage to make these jumps seem perfectly natural. They never seem like they're forcing them for novelty purposes. So, with that point clarified, I've got serious issues with this DVD. To me, there are three types of music DVDs. There are the documentary-style videos that delve into what the band is about, letting the viewer truly get to know them. Next are the basic live DVDs that strive to bring the experience of the live show into the viewer's living room. Last, there are those that are slopped together and thrown in as bonus

some tuneage to complement the in-depth interview with your favorite band. In the case of the DVD in question, you get a feature-length film recounting the history of Southern California punk legends Channel 3, starting with Mike and Kimm meeting in the third grade to their introduction to punk and then everything that happened after that. You'll also get some insight and stories from other scenesters and band members about punk, good shows, surviving riots and more along the way. The sound is excellent, the visuals are great, the editing is tight, the live footage from Alex's Bar is faboo, and the band's story is interesting, which is pretty much all you need to make a fine film. If watching an hour and a half of the band waxing poetic ain't enough, they've also included the entire set recorded at Alex's and a short bit of choice footage from a Target Video shoot back in the early '80s, and even an audio CD of the Alex's set. In all, this is a nice way to give a deserving band a huge helping of due props. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.tkorecords.com)

I walk away for thirty seconds and there's a naked Stiv Bators on my TV.

discs to complement a music CD. Unfortunately, this Le Scrawl seems to fit best in the final category. With the exception of countless shots of the band on the beach—the type most commonly seen in the worst of VH1's adult contemporary music videos—there isn't much offered to bring viewers closer to the band. Despite some interesting split screen action and shots of excited crowds, very little energy is conveyed in the live footage either. The sound is great. The music is great. It just isn't visually stimulating. In fact, I got bored. A live CD would have been a much better choice than a DVD. At least then the listener could have appreciated the excitement inherent to the music without being bothered by the tedium on the screen. —MP Johnson (Life Is Abuse, PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620)

One More for All My True Friends: DVD

The increase in access to better quality and more affordable video equipment in the new millennium seems to have spawned quite a bit of documentary makin' in the punk scene, and many are turning lenses towards telling bands' stories in ways that used to almost solely the domain of fanzines. No bad thing, this, 'cause unlike the fanzine, with video you can get

Various Artists: This Ain't Your Mom's Hardcore, Vol. 2: DVD

Wow! All the bands I hate, conveniently on one DVD! Misery Signals! Bury Your Dead! The whole gang of metalcore crappers! Seriously though, I love the title of this disc. It's a nice wad of spit in the face for all the old-school hardcore fans like me who constantly rant about how lame this type of music is, about how it has nothing in common with "real" hardcore like Minor Threat, Bad Brains, or even the heaviest Agnostic Front album, about how this shouldn't even be called hardcore at all. Well, allow me to wipe my face off and retort. Yes, the bands on this DVD clearly play with an intense level of energy. They get the crowd into it and everyone has a good time. I appreciate that, but I want more. I want music that hits me and makes me want to go crazy. I don't want to just go crazy and have some incidental music to accompany me, which is what these bands provide. I want music that sticks with me long after the mosh pit has disappeared. These bands don't deliver that music. —MP Johnson (MVD Visual)

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